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WM. LAURIE HILL

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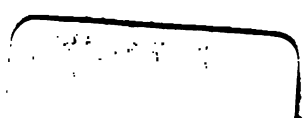

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with best wishes
of The Author
Wm Laurie Hill
Dec 18. 15

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Polly Rutherford Scurlock

THE MASTER OF THE RED BUCK AND THE BAY DOE

A STORY OF WHIG AND TORY WARFARE
IN NORTH CAROLINA IN 1781-83

BY

WILLIAM LAURIE HILL

'Tis with the rav'lings and threads of
History we weave Romance.

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DEDICATION

To the Honorable Mark Morgan of Laurel Hill, Scotland County, North Carolina, would I dedicate this effort to portray life in the Carolinas in the dark days of Whig and Tory Warfare during the American Revolution.

Mark Morgan is the product of North Carolina brain, brawn, and blood. A man of the people, and one who, in his days of prosperity, has not been removed from friendly touch with the homely Tar Heel. His wealth is untainted, and his liberal soul finds a place for liberality unfettered by denominational creed.

Wherever this book shall be read, the author is desirous that the reader shall (through this dedication) make the acquaintance of Mark Morgan, a man who will live in noble disinterested deeds when this generation shall have passed away.

WM. LAURIE HILL.

"Deeds are fruits, words are but leaves."

FLORAL MANSE, ROBESON COUNTY,
NORTH CAROLINA.
January 1st, 1906.

Gregory 29 Mar. 1944

THE MASTER OF THE RED BUCK AND THE BAY DOE

CHAPTER I

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO KING GEORGE

In the old County of Chatham, in North Carolina, dating its existence back to the year 1770, and being named in honor of Sir William Pitt, Earl of Chatham, who boldly championed the cause of the Colonies in the English House of Lords—there dwelt, during the perilous period ushered in with the year 1781, a war-worn and much divided people. There were many brave followers of the Colonial cause who gladly gave their best services to what seemed "a forlorn hope." Many of these brave men were in the field, following the fortunes of the Continental army—were in the forefront at Brandywine, Camden, Cowpens, and Guilford Court House—while their wives and daughters were plying the needle, the loom, the hoe and plow, to furnish clothing for husbands and sons; food for the army; and to sustain the dependent ones of their families.

Those Spartan women were much harassed and persecuted by organized bands of men, who, although native born, and in the sense of contiguity only were neighbors, proved to be greater enemies than the for-

eign foe. They were known as Tories, which was an Irish name for "Robbers," and in their zeal for the cause of King George did not hesitate to rob, burn, and otherwise destroy the substance of women left at times at their mercy. A third class were "Neutrals," chiefly Quakers and timid men, who feared to stand by either side in this mighty struggle, choosing rather to be "all things to all men," that they might, if possible, save their property from spoliation by either side.

It was a period of deep gloom, and there came on an ill-fated Sabbath morning to a country meeting-house not far from the mouth of Brush Creek, a man whose appearance was both singular and forbidding. He had chosen well the neighborhood in which he should first begin his crusade for King George, as there was quite a nest of Tory friends of the King dwelling along Brush Creek, many of them willing to enlist in his service.

The gray-haired old preacher, familiarly known as "Father Davy Rowe," was a man of peace, and the text chosen for his morning homily gave evidence that in the evening of his days he preferred quiet subjection to King George rather than strife for a yet remote freedom. Shaking his long, gray, wavy hair back from his piercing black eyes, he announced in deep tones—"My friends, you will find in Proverbs, the 27th Chapter and 8th Verse, these words: 'As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place.' These words come to us along with a whole chunk of other wise sayings; and they are believed to have been writ by King Solomon hisself, who sartinly knowed what he was a talkin' about in his times; and it 'pears like he was a lookin' a long way ahead, and could see that men was jest as liable

ter be fools in this year of our Lord as they was in his day and time.

"Now, it's a wise bird that always builds her nest in a safe place. You know birds differ in this, and some are jest like some folks—they don't seem to keer whar they build; hain't got one grain of common sense; while other birds is that particular you would think they had studied nest buildin' as a science. Thar's a patridge—she jest goes out into the oat field and rakes a few sticks and straws together, and calls that her home, and is sure to be ousted in harvest time before the little ones is able to stand the move. But you don't ketch a flicker playin' the fool like that. She picks out some hollow tree, pecks a hole big enough for a door, goes up high where the boys darsent venture, and she has a nest wherein she and her young uns are safe.

"Some boys was always fond of fightin' yaller jackets —smokin' 'em out of thar holes in the side of a gully, and they a lyin' down in the broom sage ter watch the pesky little creatures flyin' around and a lookin' fer thar enemy. I always respected even yaller jackets, and thought that thar nests ought to be safe from the wisp o' straw and the chunk o' fire bad boys know so well how to have handy when they want to do any devilment. I knowed two boys onst, and one un 'em is sittin' down thar in the amen corner now, with a wife and a likely darter 'longside o' him; as the tother isn't here I'll call his name. Well, Amos Barkley and my amen corner member thar, they undertook onst ter smoke out a whole nest er yaller jackets, but so mad did them little yaller fellows get that even the broom sage wouldn't hide them boys. Amos he got away with considerable less than a thousand stings, while 'Amen' reached home with a head almost as big as my old oak,

split corn basket, and if his sweetheart had only seed him then, that likely gal would never have been born, and that's a fact.

"Yes, my hearers, meddlin' with nests is dangersome, whether the nest is a yaller jacket's, bee martin's or folks; and they that indulge in sich undertakin's is sure in the end to have thar own nests broke up, and thar young uns scattered in the woods, seekin' rest, and findin' no place whar they can be safe and rest easy; and that's a fact. But some un you will say, 'What's all this got to do with Parson Davy Rowe's text?' and 'We wonder if he has changed his 'legiance from good King George?—for surely some o' his folks is doin' unlawful things and meddlin' with our nests.' Not so fast, my hearers; I do not say but what our Clarks, Registers, and folks that be commissioned to collect taxes and fees be a leetle graspin'. Sich folks harried the Jews in the days o' our Savior; but remember, the Savior, although Lord o' Heaven and earth, paid his taxes like a man, and wrought a miracle to do it. Bein' as he hadn't the ready change by him at the time, he sent a hand (and one of his best, being Peter) who cotch a fish with a piece o' money in his mouth; and, with that money, he paid his taxes, and Peter's, too, although Jesus mought have claimed to go tax free, for Heaven and earth belonged to him.

"Now, thar's Joel Sowell, who married last January one of the finest gals in all Brush Creek Country, who kicked like all possessed because the Clark charged him twenty shillin's fer a license; and when her daddy deeded to him two hundred acres o' Brush Creek land, he kicked ag'in because the Register charged forty shillin's fer puttin' it on the book. Thar's Luke Stallins a goin' about and tellin' people that Herman Hus-

bands, who has been tried over in Orange as a turbulent and seditious character, is a pure patriot, a much-abused citizen; and I hear tell that a preacher named Dave Caldwell is rampagin' the country over thar around old Alamance meetin' house, tellin' the people that 'they are doin' God's service ter rebel ag'in' good King George, and that this province o' rights ought to be free o' kingly rule.' Now, my hearers, Saint Paul is pretty good authority fer me; I don't know what the Reverend David Caldwell thinks o' him. Now, Paul said in writin' to the church in Rome—'Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers; for there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God.' That's the kind of Gospel I am preaching to-day.

"Less than a century ago this province was a waste-howlin' wilderness; the abode of savage men and wild beasts. Through the kindness and protection of the English nation, our fathers was helped in thar efforts to colonize this wilderness; and to-day we see snug nests, thrifty homes, whar onst the Indian roamed at will. The feeble child have become a strong man; the son thinks his-self bigger than his daddy; the bird is wanderin' from his nest. Now, my hearers, what is to be the upshot of all this?—is the child America bigger and stronger than King George and his mighty hosts? Nay, verily, and I see trouble upon trouble, and that's a fact. Brother is now ag'in' brother, father ag'in' son; the darkness of many a night will be lighted by the fires of burning dwellings and barns; homes will be desolated; children fatherless; mothers widows; and all fer what? Better, far better 'bear the ills we have than fly to those we know not of.' That is what William Shakespeare said, and he knowed. We have

got the substance now, most un you have got good nests, and we have over us the protecting arms of King George. Those that wander from thar place are a chasin' shadows; are like foolish birds that wander—their nests will be broken up, their substance scattered, and on wandering wing they will seek an unfound rest.

"I see in this congregation, out there in the grove, a man I have seen afore, and I have hearn he has a fresh message from the officers of our good King. He has heard some of my discourse, and he knows whether I have told the truth as to the upshot of all this rebellion. He knows the strength of King George, the weakness of the feeble folk that now oppose him. When the congregation is dismissed you will hear some strong words from Colonel David Fanning, who holds a commission in the Royal army.

"And now, may the hand of Almighty God stay this tide of sinful rebellion; give this people grace to live for him and for their King and country. Amen."

CHAPTER II

BRUSH CREEK CONGREGATION HEAR DAVID FANNING

The people gathered on this Sunday morning were a fair sample of a country congregation in North Carolina at the period of which we are writing, when neighbor was arrayed against neighbor, and a man's enemies were often those of his own household. Father Davy Rowe was of the Baptist faith and order, but there were many in his congregation who had been reared under Presbyterian and Quaker influence, and, while not members of the Baptist church, attended at Brush Creek because of their respect for religion in general, and because no more congenial place of worship was near them.

Father Rowe wrought at wheelwright and blacksmithing during the week, and filled his appointment at Brush Creek on Sundays with great punctuality, free of charge for his services, as he proudly proclaimed his belief in a free Gospel. Personally, he was beloved by all his neighbors, although those of them who did not believe in his "Gospel according to King George" had many a debate with him as he stood by his anvil, sledge in hand, his face begrimed with smut from the forge.

On this bright Sunday morning Father Davy was clean shaven, had on his best suit of home-woven linen, seemed particularly strong in the faith, and his ad-

herents gathered about him as he came down the pulpit steps, while a majority of those who had kinsfolk in the ranks of the Continental army adjourned to the grove and to a discussion of their dinner baskets, as well as the sermon.

Walking up to the stranger whom many now knew to be David Fanning, Father Davy extended his hand, saying, "If this be David Fanning, I am glad to welcome ye, and I want you to tell the people some more about good King George. Can't ye preach?"

"I am David Fanning," was the reply, "but my callin' isn't to preach; I am an officer under King George, and am here to tell your people that are in rebellion some mighty plain truths."

"That's right; mount that stump thar and tell these people whether I told 'em the truth or not this mornin'."

"Indeed you did, Father Rowe, but you didn't tell it all."

Responding to Father Rowe's invitation, Fanning then proceeded to harangue the people, and many Whigs and their sympathizers, leaving their dinner baskets, drew near to listen to the new "Apostle of King George," as one of them called him.

"I am a stranger to most of ye, although I have met Father Rowe before, and am glad to hear him giving this people the pure doctrine—what I call 'Loyalty Gospel.' To those who are true to King and country I would say; Stand to your colors and fear naught that this rebellious people can do. I have recently seen Major Craig, his Majesty's trusted commanding officer at Wilmington, and am commissioned to rally around me all true and loyal men in this part of the Province, and to suppress disloyalty wherever I find

it. The King would have a peaceful and prosperous Province but for disloyal spirits who defy all laws unless they make them, and pay no taxes unless their tools collect them. To the disloyal I would say: Return to your homes, to your plows, looms, workshops, and obey the laws as administered by authorized officers of the Crown, and all will be well. You are engaged in a hopeless struggle, a wicked rebellion, and the King, in this war, is sure to conquer. Picture to yourselves this Province conquered; where then would those now in rebellion find a place of refuge? Like the sons of Ishmael, every loyal hand will be against you, and a few thousand homeless fugitives, you and your little ones will be seeking safety in our mountain solitudes, only to find at last that loyal men control even that part of our sod.

"Any true men here who desire to enroll themselves in the army of King George will hand in your names to John Rains, a man who will lead you where all brave men go; and we will all join hands, my friends, in putting down this spirit of rebellion which King George is willing to forgive if abandoned, but is determined to conquer regardless of loss in blood and treasure."

As Fanning closed his harangue, which was much longer than as recorded here, John Rains produced a muster roll and succeeded in enrolling a number of adventurous spirits who were seeking service on the strong side, as it seemed to them, or were ready for any daring deed that promised an opportunity for plunder and booty. "Come along here, Joel Sowell," called Jack Rains, a stalwart man with no trace of the gentleman in his rugged features, his eyes having in them a cold glitter, like sharp steel, and his mouth an expression we

can only call cruel. "Come along, I say, and enroll your name; we want sich men as you—you've got a wife and a nest to fight for."

"Not I, Jack Rains. A man that has been robbed by the law officers of the crown will never fight for a king. In this scrimmage, when I fight, 'twill be for my rights and for my home that will soon be taxed away from me if things go on as they are now going."

"That's right, Joel!" exclaimed his young wife, a pretty, rosy-cheeked, brown-eyed woman. "If you ever join Jack Rains' gang, don't come home any more."

"Never fear me, lass; Jack is on a cold trail. I may jine General Green, but never a gang to plunder my neighbors."

"I have marked your words, Joel Sowell, and your wife's words, too. You may live to see the day when a kind word from Jack Rains or Colonel Fanning would save your rebellious carcass and your home from devouring flames. Here, Luke Stallings, redeem your name by putting it down on this muster roll. You have already committed treason enough to hang ye, but I will take you for a bullet stopper and mark off old scores. Remember, Herman Husbands must leave this Province, and all like him do likewise or answer to the law; you know what that means."

"Jack Rains, if it *is* Sunday, I cannot stand such talk as that; who made you or this Colonel Fanning either expounders of our laws or judges as to our treason? You are undertaking a dirty job, raising men to rob, plunder and kill your neighbors. Oh, if old stuttering Corneal Harnett could just catch the pair of ye, what a royal hangin' there would be, sure as flint makes fire."

The cold eyes of Jack Rains flashed as he answered: "Luke Stallings, if 'twant Sunday I'd damn ye.

Nothin' will cure you but a bullit or about fifteen feet of King George's hemp. Your name is down, but not on my muster roll, and you'll be tended to later. Say, Amen Scurlock, you are one of the best rifle shots on Brush Creek; down with your name. We won't, on account of your age, expect hard service, but I'll give ye somethin' better to do than fightin' yaller jackets' nests."

"Can't do it, Jack, thar's nobody at home but the old woman and our darter, Polly; and Men-repent Scurlock's place is to take care of his own fireside. My craps is in the grass, my taxes is outrageously high, and nobody to save the craps and pay the taxes except me. To be sure, I have a few niggers, but whoever heard tell o' they workin' unless you stay with them. No, Jack Rains, fightin' ain't my business, but I am goin' to protect my own agin' all comers, and my rifle can do better work than killin' my neighbors because they want or don't want, a king."

"I see how it is, Amen, Luke Stallings is sweet on your darter Polly, and he is the most audacious rebel in all Chatham County. If you and your folks mixes up with this kind of cattle, you may look out for what is sure to come."

"And what is that, Jack Rains?"

"Why, you will be put down among the rebels and will have to take just what they get. Colonel Fanning and his loyal men will know well enough what to do when they come down Brush Creek; and, depend on it, you will repent harboring or encouraging Luke Stallings or any of his rebel gang."

Luke had stood by while his name had been handled so freely, and his righteous wrath could no longer be restrained. There were two mad men, for Men-repent

Scurlock scouted the assumption on the part of Jack Rains to dictate who should be a guest in his house.

Scurlock and Luke Stallings moved toward Rains at the same time, while he stepped back toward a huge oak tree not many steps away, where he had left his gun. Other neighbors also gathered around, each producing his long-barrelled squirrel gun or rifle, and then stepped to the side of the man he intended to befriend. There was soon an array of arms and of angry men (about equal in numbers on either side) that transformed that congregation into a passion-moved mob, and only a beginning was necessary to precipitate a bloody battle.

Luke Stallings was the first to speak, and his deep voice and flashing blue eyes told all who saw and heard him that he was ready for a desperate struggle. "Jack Rains, God knows I didn't come to this meetin' house to have a row with you or any other man. This is no place for such scenes, and you are cowardly to take advantage of this place and the presence of your friend, Colonel Fanning, to insult me. Remember, Luke Stallings never wantonly insults any man, and never forgets when he is insulted. I shall not fight here unless you force it on me; but, if you do, it shall be a fight to a finish."

Amen Scurlock then commanded silence, as in a clear tone of voice he said: "Only a few more words, and then we will be governed in what we do by the necessities of the case. I want Jack Rains and all his friends on this meetin' house ground to know that he, nor no other man, can tell Men-repent Scurlock who he shall or shall not invite to his own house. That house is mine as long as it stands with a roof over it, and Luke Stallings or any other friend, be he in favor

of the colonies or the king, will be welcome there if I choose. If that don't suit Jack Rains and Colonel Fanning I'm not here to help it, and I want to know what they are going to do 'bout it."

At this stage of the quarrel Father Rowe, who had been talking with some of his flock in a remote part of the grove, near a cool spring, attracted by angry voices, quickened his ponderous frame into a slow trot; and, although the path up the hill was steep, he made wonderful speed for one weighing over two hundred solid pounds; and arrived on the scene just as Rains was about to reply to both Stallings and Scurlock, and after Stallings had primed his rifle.

The old man's presence seemed to act as oil upon the troubled waters. Raising his voice and lifting his hands toward Heaven, he cried: "Peace, peace, peace; let no man, however unworthy, be slain at God's altar. Colonel Fanning, I did not give ye permission to stir up the angry passions of my flock on the Lord's Day; what is all this about?"

"It is all wrong, Father Rowe," exclaimed the wary Fanning. "The zeal of my good friend Rains outruns his judgment, and has led him to commit a grave fault. Of course he knows your people as to their loyalty or disloyalty better than I do; but he has chosen the wrong time and place for commendation or rebuke. Please proceed with the enrollment, Mr. Rains; and you should ask pardon if you have insulted any man on this ground.

"I'll do as you say, Colonel Fanning," replied Rains, "but you don't know some of these Brush Creek folks as I do. I didn't mean to insult nobody; but when a shoe pinches a fellow he must squeal."

"That will do, Rains; on with the enrollment," said Fanning abruptly.

"Well, I have got some good men down, Colonel Fanning—some that ain't afeard of the devil himself; but I want that tall, strong fellow over thar—" pointing to a stalwart specimen of manhood who had hitherto kept aloof, but alert and ready at any moment to side with the Whigs.

"Who is he, Rains?"

"He, that's Charley Sheering; he is a match for you, Colonel, at ridin', or the use of sword or gun, either; but he sympathizes with the rebels, unless what is narated about him is untrue. Say! here, Charley Sheering, ye are wanted."

"And what do you want of me, Jack Rains?" said the giant, as he strode up with his long rifle at a trail.

"What should I want, Charley Sheering, but to have you take your stand for King George and your country —give us your name as a member of our loyal troop."

The face of Charley Sheering, as he looked steadfastly at Rains and Fanning, was like an angry cloud; his eyes kindled into a blaze, his mouth was set with such an expression of firmness and strength that it awed even his bold enemies, and they quailed before his steady gaze. His ruddy complexion deepened, as the blood from his throbbing heart rushed madly through every vein, and for a moment he seemed to be weighing his words that he might give them the full force the occasion demanded. Fanning watched him as he had done no other man at Brush Creek Meeting House, for, in him, he saw an enemy to kingly power destined to give him no little trouble.

Father Rowe drew near Sheering, and laying his arm over his shoulder, said gently: "Easy, easy now, Char-

ley; you know I love ye, wayward as ye are; think well before ye speak, Charley."

"It's all thought out, Father Rowe," answered Charley in a rather more subdued voice than his passion would have suggested. "Jack Rains knows me, and he knows that Charley Sheering is not for sale. You may buy a farm, you may buy a slave, I have heard that a man can even buy a wife, but, my God! the idea of buying a man puts all my blood in a boil. There's but one way, Father Davy, to end all this, and to keep Brush Creek from running blood. Dismiss the congregation; let Jack Rains and Colonel Fanning leave here quick and take their gang of recruits with them; and I will answer that our men will go peacefully to their homes and will not molest this nest of Tories, unless they begin some of their devilish work—then 'twill be, 'an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.' "

"Come, boys," continued Sheering, "let's go home; we have heard quite enough of 'the Gospel according to King George,' for one day."

There was an immediate movement in the crowd—Sheering, Sowell, Stallings, and Scurlock gathered their friends together, while the sympathizers with Rowe, Rains, and Fanning were not long in mounting their horses and scattering toward their homes, for they saw the cloud, even though no bigger than a man's hand.

Soon the old woods around Brush Creek Meeting House were left in the keeping of the birds, as they sung their vespers from the boughs toward sunset; while the passions aroused on that fateful day caused many a bloody wound, and brought sorrow to many once happy homes.

CHAPTER III

A MUSTER OF FANNING'S MEN AT JACK RAINS' CABIN

As Amen Scurlock jogged along through the woods, carrying his good wife Amanda (familiarly known as Mandy) on a pillion behind him, his daughter, Polly Rutherford, rode beside them, mounted on a dapple gray filly she had raised in the yard and orchard, and had taught to come when she called her by name—"Dapple"—to thrust her head into the bridle and accept the bit eagerly, while she responded with a whinny to Polly's tender touch and gentle words. When the road was wide enough, Luke Stallings rode on the other side of Polly, being well mounted on a chestnut sorrel of much spirit and power. When the bridle-way grew more narrow it would frequently happen that Polly would let Daddy Scurlock ride ahead, while she found room enough for Dapple's dainty feet beside the fiery sorrel and his handsome rider.

Behind them rode Charley Sheering, a young man of rare qualities as a Whig leader, and one of the bravest and most dangerous men the Tories had to deal with. He lived several miles beyond the home of Scurlock, had married the niece of an old friend of the Scurlocks, and had yielded to their pressing invitation to spend the night with them, for he had an object in so doing which he had not yet mentioned to either Scurlock or Stallings. Sheering knew that the cabin of

Jack Rains was not more than three miles from Scurlock's home, and he had to pass that cabin in going to his own home. He believed that the coming into their neighborhood of David Fanning boded no good to the Whigs and their cause; and had fully resolved not long to lose sight of this notorious Tory while he remained in the cabin of John Rains.

On reaching the comfortable home of Scurlock, the men looked after the stabling of their horses and then took their seats on the porch to talk, while Mrs. Scurlock and Polly were busy in getting out some rare china and delf ware, and arranging the supper table, while a timely word hastening old Anachy, the darkie cook, with her corn-pone and wheaten hoe-cakes, came from Mandy Scurlock; and the smell of broiling venison told in advance of the coming of a bountiful spread.

Honest Men-repent Scurlock, or "Amen," as Father Rowe had dubbed him, was a quiet, inoffensive citizen, beloved by his neighbors regardless of their party affiliations, and a man who delighted in being hospitable. Had Fanning himself sought his hospitality it would have been cheerfully accorded to him; and while his prosperous condition made him conservative, and it was his desire that the present order of government continue, rather than bloodshed and desolation in the effort to secure liberty; yet, in the deep recesses of his heart, he prayed that the Whigs might succeed; and he never failed in his quiet way to do them a good turn. "Aunt Mandy," as she was called all over the neighborhood, was a more outspoken rebel, and failed not to rejoice at every success the Whigs scored, and could with difficulty suppress her scorn for a Tory. Charles Sheering was her model of a man that lived up to his principles, and she often told Luke Stallings, with a knowing shake

of her head, that "if Charley Sheering was hunting a wife along Brush Creek he would soon find one, and the gals would like Luke a heap bettér the more he was like Charley."

Luke had grown stronger in his faith in the final outcome of the Whig cause, and was as brave and bold for his experience, as Aunt Mandy's model. Sheering, in the months that passed after that fateful Sunday, found Luke his ready helper as they tracked Fanning and Rains in their bloody campaign against the Whigs in Chatham, Orange, and the counties bordering on the Scotch settlement; and Fanning soon learned both to hate and to dread them.

Polly Rutherford Scurlock was an only child, and a young woman that, having few advantages in obtaining an education, had succeeded in a remarkable degree in educating herself. She read well, and her active mind devoured all the good books within reach of her; and she had managed from time to time to add to her store, until the mantel shelf and a little pine table in her room showed an array of books that were her companions and her delight. She wrote a beautiful hand, and took pleasure in jotting down her thoughts and the daily happenings in her quiet country life. The old spinet her grandmother Rutherford had brought from Scotland was kept in repair by the skill of Daddy Scurlock, and her mother, whose fingers had never lost their skill in music, had early taught her the first principles of harmony; and the wonderful talent she possessed enabled her to become quite proficient in playing, while a rich and well-modulated voice was also her special gift and charm. She was mistress of the spinning wheel, the flax wheel, the winding blades; and her dainty fingers could make the knitting-needles click an

accompaniment to her rich voice, as she sang some merry lay and wrought a stocking. She had just passed eighteen, and with a well-rounded figure, dark violet eyes, auburn hair—with a glint of sunlight all through it—she was a daughter to love and cherish, and a dangerous associate for any young man unless he was prepared to capitulate promptly to the charms of a rare woman. Polly Rutherford had been named for her Grandmother Rutherford, and had inherited many of that rare old Scotch-woman's attractions and characteristics. She was a rebel against kingly power, and was outspoken in her condemnation of every form of oppression the Colonists were compelled to endure. It was her brave espousal of the Continental cause that had decided Luke Stallings in his determination to win her for a wife; and he had about reached the point of asking her a point-blank question; therefore he was spending the night at the Scurlocks.

As the gentlemen sat on the porch awaiting supper, their conversation naturally turned toward Parson Rowe's sermon, the advent of Fanning, and the exciting scenes of the enrollment.

"I like not to-day's work," said Amen Scurlock. "There will be bloodshed and trouble, and Dave Fanning and Jack Rains will be at the bottom of it. I love my country and my people, but it do look like they are engaged in a hopeless struggle ag'in' the King; and I hate to see valuable lives lost and property destroyed, when—I am afeard it will end in hangings and confiscation. I am getting old, and the older we get the more we desire peace."

"Daddy Scurlock," said Sheering, "you ain't well and strong like you used to was, or you wouldn't talk that way. I know where your heart is, but you have

good reasons for holding aloof, and I don't think any the less of you for it. You have only one child, and she's a gal, and so pretty she needs watchin' and protectin' in these war times. Your health's not good, and you are right to stay at home; but with Luke and me 'tis different. Every bone in my body, and every drop of my blood, is ag'in' King George and all his minions; and the devil never discovered to the British a meaner or more dastardly helper than Dave Fanning. There ain't acres enough in Carolina to hold both of us, and I mean to hunt him down like I would a wild turkey; and he has got to go under ground or quit the grit. I am going over to Jack Rains' cabin to-night to find out what those devils are about."

"I am with you," said Luke, knocking the ashes from his cob pipe; "Fannin' is after no good; and Charley, we two must not lose sight of him while he is on Brush Creek. As for Jack Rains, I always knew he was a bad one; and if ever we get into a fight one of us will never get back home."

"Hadn't you fellows better rest quietly here to-night, and take daylight to go by Jack Rains' cabin?—you have to pass there anyway," said "Amen."

"Oh, we will be back here to-night, Amen—unless something happens," said Sheering. "Luke and me will just ride up there and reconnoiter a bit, and our motions will be in accordance with what we see and hear."

"Well, come along in to supper," said Amen; "I hear Polly a-callin' us. But really, I do hope, my friends, you won't run into any danger. Mandy and Polly are such Rebels I'm afeard the Tories will burn me out, and now my two best friends and neighbors are likely to get into trouble—this world is full of trouble."

"Don't take council of your fears, Daddy Scurlock;

we may see trouble, my friend, but we shall give Fanning and Rains trouble to burn, or drive them out of the country," said Sheering, as they went into the supper room.

"How do you like Colonel Fanning, Aunt Mandy?" asked Charley Sheering after they were seated.

"About like I do a rattlesnake, Charley; I never saw any good for a snake except to kill him, Charley; he is here on no good errand, and I warn you now to watch him. Old Father Rowe is getting in his dotage, and is such a rank Tory I am losing all patience with him. Jack Rains is just the tool Fanning has been looking for, and his coming here means dividing our people, rapine and plunder."

"Luke is going with me to look after the gentlemen to-night, Aunt Mandy, and they won't do much devilment that we do not catch up with while he's on Brush Creek. We shall get back here some time between now and daybreak, so you will excuse us for eating an extra hearty meal, and leavin' as soon as the moon goes down."

"So you are going, too, are you, Luke?" said Polly in an undertone, while Sheering was talking.

"Yes, Polly, pleasure would keep me here, but duty says 'go,' and I am going."

"That is right, Luke; I will sit up until you both return, for I am anxious to hear what is going on at Jack Rains' cabin; but you have two hours yet before the moon goes down, and after supper we can sing a few sacred songs as at least a worshipful closing of a Sabbath soiled by the strife of tongues."

A bright smile played around the corners of Luke's mouth as the thought passed through his mind: "I won-

der if Polly thinks all the two hours is to be spent in singing and talking Fanning."

The supper room was also the sitting-room when the Scurlocks had company, and after the table had been cleared, and the china carefully washed and placed in the corner cupboard, Daddy Scurlock, Aunt Mandy and Charley Sheering took seats on the woodbine-covered porch, while Polly and Luke remained in the sitting-room.

The spinet was opened, and their voices were soon blending in an old melody that was a great favorite in camp meetings and at the country meeting houses of that day. The words, written by Charles Wesley, had found a spirited tune in "Lenox," and as the rich, full tones of Polly's voice mingled with the uncultivated but naturally sweet tenor of Luke's, their audience on the porch, and the darkies from kitchen and quarter, gathered about the door and listened with many manifestations of pleasure, old Anachy venturing, as she stood near the front porch in the waning moonlight, to join in, with her light treble, "blow ye de trumpet blow."

"Well done!" exclaimed Charley Sheering, as their voices ceased. "That beats Brush Creek meeting house out of sight; sing us some more."

Luther's hymn, "A Safe Stronghold Our God Is Still," was a great favorite with Polly, and Luke's voice harmonized as well in this great battle hymn of the church as in the trumpet song; and thus song after song from heart and lips filled the first hour before the moon should go down; and Polly then closed the spinet, for which Luke gave her a grateful look, and said: "Thank you, Polly; I was just about to say this last hour to-night belongs to me."

"And that be so, Luke, what are you going to do with it?" was Polly's quizzical question.

"I am going to try and make myself happy for life, Polly. Such things have been done, and all in less than an hour."

"Surely you are expecting to accomplish too much in one short hour, Luke."

"Not if you answer my catechism all right, Polly; and I am quite sure you know what I would ask."

Polly had heard the old story from other lips, young as she was; and, while shrewd enough to guess the nature of Luke's catechism, her innate love of mischief prompted her to decline to assist him; so she said innocently: "How should I know the nature of your catechism, Luke? Is it anything about man's chief end?"

"I reckon it is, Polly; hang it all! if man wasn't made on purpose to take care of some girl, I don't know what he *was* made for. Now can't you help me just a little bit, Polly?—it nearly chokes me to get it out, but it must come."

"Poor Luke, what is the matter with you? If mammy was here she would bang you in the back. She says that is the best thing to do when you get choked."

"Polly, you are just making fun of me, and I am in dead earnest. I love you, Polly Rutherford Scurlock, and I stayed here to-night just to tell you so. I am going to join the Continental army just as soon as Fanning's gang leaves Brush Creek; and I wanted you to know, Polly, that my only hope for earthly happiness is in the possession of your love; and should my life be sacrificed for my country, the only bitter pang would be parting from you. I don't ask you to marry me now, for these are no times for young men who are called to defend their country to marry. But I do want

to go away feeling that one heart loves me and would welcome me if I should come back in safety, or would sorrow should I fill a patriot's grave. I am in your hands, Polly; do with me as your heart wills."

Polly sat gazing at a deer-skin rug on the floor, nervously twirling the silver chain that held a golden locket suspended from her neck. She had been thus honored before by more than one young man, but never before had she felt other than indifferent to the proffered honor. The silence was painful, and Luke was growing restless. Polly shyly glanced now and then, from beneath her long brown lashes, at the handsome young man so bluntly, yet tenderly, pleading his cause. Her cheeks were flushed and there was a quiver of emotion that she could ill conceal; those violet eyes shyly refused to meet Luke's loving gaze, and her tongue forebore, as yet, to utter a word.

Luke waited until it seemed to him the short hour that was to make him so happy had well-nigh passed. At last he could stand the strain no longer; he caught her beautiful hands in his strong grasp, and, caressing them gently, said: "I was a fool, Polly, ever to think that such a queen of a girl as you are would ever mate with a rough woodsman like me. If I have grieved you, Polly, pardon me; I must go—'tis almost time to get our horses."

Luke felt the slender fingers held so firmly in his grasp tremble, and, in Polly's eyes, as she timidly raised them, there were tears just ready to fall. Then, with a sob in her voice, she said: "Luke, you won't help me a little bit; you are so blind, so stupid not to understand, not to see."

Polly's tear-filled eyes soon found a resting place on Luke's shoulder; and, folded close to his heart, she

plighted him her bright young life when he should return from the war, and the liberties of her country should be won.

The ride to Jack Rains' cabin was quickly made, and Sheering and Stallings exchanged but few words on the road, while their approach was made with great caution. Dismounting, and tying their horses in a thick clump of pines at a safe distance from the cabin, they cautiously crept through a little patch of corn near a path that led from the spring up to the cabin, their keen eyes on the watch, for they fully expected that Fanning would have sentries posted that the Tory conclave might be held with more safety and privacy. Their plans had not been perfected, and so strong was the Tory sentiment in that part of Brush Creek settlement that Fanning and Rains exhibited no caution on this occasion; so Sheering and Luke found no difficulty in approaching the cabin, and secreting themselves behind an ash-hopper in the corner of the huge stick and mud chimney.

Through the holes made by the dropping out of the mud in many places, they had a good view of the interior of the large room in which Fanning, Rains, and some half a dozen followers had assembled, and could hear every word uttered. It seems that Rains had made a list of the land owners and tenants in the Brush Creek settlement, and, when Sheering and Luke first reached their hiding place, Fanning had just begun going over the list, and his questions were very minute, his comments ominous as to those who were tainted with rebellion.

"I knowed it," whispered Sheering; "we will get on to their schemes to-night, and a precious lot of devil-

ment they are hatching. Listen now, Luke; and no talkin' any further until we get away."

"How about Amen Scurlock, Rains?" questioned Fanning.

"Well, he's a yea, nay; no harm in him; good neighbor, well to do, and, but for his women, would help the King. Old Mandy Scurlock is the devil's own rebel; and the gal is wuss, if anything."

"She is pretty, is she not, Rains?"

"Just as pretty as a picture, Colonel; thar ain't sich another high-stepper on Brush Creek as Polly Scurlock."

"Ah-ha!—we will watch them, Rains, and the old man must be made to fear the King through apprehension for the safety of his girl; do you understand, Rains?"

"Guess I do, Colonel, and thar's six fellows here to-night that wouldn't mind getting away with Polly Scurlock; then the old man would shell out his shinin' pounds mighty free to get her back ag'in."

"That is a good idea; we must make Scurlock a friend to the King, if it sacrifices the girl; do you understand, Rains?"

Luke, in his hiding place behind the ash-hopper, heard, too; and he ground his teeth together so hard Sheering nudged him, whispering: "Stop that grittin', Luke; hush! I tell ye."

"The devil couldn't stand that, Charley; let me kill the scoundrel right now," whispered Luke.

"No, no, Luke, we have got more to larn from him to-night; jest listen awhile—he'll get to you and me arter awhile."

Fanning proceeded with the list. "How about Joel

Sowell, Jack? He was one of those fellows that refused to enlist."

"The very same, Colonel; we can't depend on Joel—he and that young wife of his'n are arrant rebels."

"Let Joel look well to himself; I think we can give him a trip to Wilmington to see Major Craig; and who will then take care of his pretty wife, Rains?"

Rains gave a low, guttural laugh of approval, and said with a devilish grin: "That's the talk, Colonel; these frisky heifers that think theirselves too nice to speak to Jack Rains must be made to feel our power, and Joel Sowell's wife is one of 'em. Thar are some more like her along Brush Creek, and we will make it lively for 'em when the music begins, Colonel."

"Go on with the roll, Jack Rains; you are as spiteful as the devil; what of Corneal Tyson?"

"He's on both sides, Colonel; but there's little harm in him. He feeds well, never turns a Tory away, and by jings! he's got the best pack er hounds and finest horses in Chatham or any other county."

"We will put him down as neutral, Rains, and will not disturb him unless he becomes decidedly rebellious. We can forage on him whenever we come into this section. The worst man to deal with comes next, Rains—that giant and devil combined, Charles Sheering. He is a hell of a fellow, and the Province could get on well without him."

"You said somethin' then, Colonel; Sheering ought to be killed or run out of the country; there's no friend of King George that is safe when he is around."

"We will attend to him promptly, Rains; make an example of him, and at the same time rid the country of a pest. 'Tis my opinion that young Luke Stallings

is but little better than Sheering; and it might be well either for him to go to Wilmington, or——"

The sentence was not finished, for just then Sheering could restrain Luke no longer; he thrust the barrel of his rifle into a crack in the chimney and fired. The rifle shot startled Fanning, Rains, and every follower in the room; a rush was made for the door, and, rifle in hand, the whole company made a rigid search of the little inclosure in which the cabin stood.

Meanwhile, Sheering and Luke had made a rapid retreat through the corn patch and to the clump of pines, mounted their horses, and were riding rapidly away, reaching Amen Scurlock's house about an hour after midnight.

CHAPTER IV

THE SHOOTING OF CHARLEY SHEERING

"That was a narrow graze," said Fanning; "the ball entered the log just by my head. Who was the scoundrel, do you suppose, Rains?"

"It warn't anybody but Sheering or that young devil, Luke Stallings; and they was together, whichever of 'em shot, Colonel. I tell ye, nothin' but killin' will do them any good; and 'tis evident they think the same about you and me."

"Let everything get quiet now, Rains; out with the torch-light; place a guard; arrange for reliefs; and the balance of us must go to sleep. We shall soon get to work in earnest, and Brush Creek rebels had better take to the woods."

While this colloquy was going on at Rains' cabin, Charley Sheering and Luke, having reached Scurlock's, found the inmates all wide awake and waiting for them.

"You are back sooner than I expected, boys. Come in; Mandy and Polly have a little somethin' to eat ready for ye," said Amen, as he met his guests at the gate. "Dark ride ye've had."

"And dark deeds are a-brewing, Amen Scurlock, or my name's not Charley Sheering."

"I was afeard of it, that I was, Charley; come in and tell us all ye heard and seen."

"That would take all night, Amen; and we must get

a wink of sleep and be off afore day. Howsomever, we will tell ye this much, Amen; and we'd better do our talkin' beyond hearin' of the women. You, Luke, Joel Sowell and me are all spotted, and have got to watch and look out for ourselves. We overheard their plots, and know now exactly what Fanning is here for. He has been furnished by that scoundrel Rains with a list of every man on Brush Creek, and a record of exactly how he stands toward the King. They have got you down as 'neither fish, flesh, fowl, nor good red-herring,' as the old saying goes. A little bit friendly to the King but over-slaughed by your old woman and Polly. They mean to make you show your hand, and—I hate to say it, Amen—has design ag'in' Polly, so as to get you in their power."

"That's so, Daddy Scurlock," said Luke in a whisper; "I heard them say it in so many words; and, for God's sake, don't let Polly go out of the house without you are in sight. That wretch, Jack Rains, said tonight he had half a dozen fellows ready, any one of them to run away with Polly Scurlock."

"This is sad news, my friends," said Scurlock, with a break in his voice. "Sad news indeed; what am I to do with the poor lass when she is not safe under her own father's roof?"

"Ain't there some place you could send Polly, where she would be out of reach of this thieving lot that are bent on harrying our people into submission to the King?" questioned Sheering.

"It is a long journey, but once I can get Polly safely under the roof of my old friend, Parson David Caldwell, over in Guilford, not far from Buffalo Meeting House, she would be out of reach of Fanning's gang," replied Scurlock.

"It must be done," said Luke emphatically; "I want to join Greene's army, and will take that direction. I had not thought of going until after Fanning leaves Brush Creek, but any time you wish to make the journey, Daddy Scurlock, I will go with you."

"It is my notion, Luke, that you can serve the country quite as well in watching and fighting Fanning as in going to the army. Of course you will go with friend Scurlock to Guilford whenever he is ready, and get sweet little Polly out of harm's way, but the Tories are going to give us plenty of fighting right at home, and we must get ready for it. Fanning as good as said to-night that Joel Sowell would be sent to Wilmington, and you and me were to be got rid of; and I know what that means."

"I am willing to fight the enemy anywhere," said Luke; "and if it is best for me to come back with Daddy Scurlock and watch this vile gang that Jack Rains is getting together, I will come, for he has gathered the scum and scurf of Chatham County. About the toughest of the lot is that fellow, Steve Walker; and Dick Edwards is not many shades better."

"Come in now," said Amen, "and, for the Lord's sake, don't tell the women folks what you have told me. It is useless to worry them to-night; and I will make my plans, and Luke and I can take Polly Rutherford over to Parson Caldwell's this week."

"We thought you were all going to spend the shank of the night at the stable," said Aunt Mandy. "Surely you must have been powerfully pleased with one another, and forgot there were clever women about."

Polly gave Luke a quizzical smile and added: "I don't think they deserve a hot supper, mammy. What

do you think of a young man who prefers talking to men when a fairly good-looking girl is about?"

"He deserves to live and die a grumpy old bachelor, Polly Rutherford; that's what he does; but the girls all forgive them and are willing to take them into favor again on probation, as the Methodists do. I believe in 'final perseverance' in other things besides religion; how about you, Luke?"

Luke, being thus appealed to, blushed all over his face and behind his ears, but bravely answered: "'Final perseverance' is my doctrine, Aunt Mandy, as you will find out before very long. It was not my preference to stand out there in the dark talking to Charley and Daddy Scurlock; but we had some things to say that the trees mustn't whisper to the enemy, and you women folk will hear of in due time. So pardon us this time, and please don't refuse us that second supper, for I am as hungry as a wolf."

"So am I," said Charley. "And I will say this much for Luke—he was the most impatientest fellow to come into the house I ever seen. Kept watchin' the porch where Polly was a-standin', and come in; I thought he would. What have you been doin' to Luke, Polly?—he certainly acts queer to-night."

"Nothing in the world, Mr. Sheering; I would not harm a hair on the young man's head," replied Polly innocently.

"Oh, no; but mightn't you have said something to him that would raise the hair on his head? He's mighty bigoty somehow, and, do what I could to-night, I couldn't keep him from blazing away with his rifle at that crowd up to Jack Rains' cabin; he like to have played the devil—axin' your pardon, ladies, for the freedom of the expression."

"Oh! Oh!" exclaimed Aunt Mandy and Polly in a breath.

"Now, Sheering, you have let the big black cat outer the bag," said Amen Scurlock; "and we had just as well tell Mandy and Polly all about it."

"Well, they've got to know it, Amen, and the sooner all of us makes our plans the safer and the better for us."

So while Sheering and Luke partook of the bountiful second supper, Sheering related to his auditors all he had heard as to Fanning's plans, and both he and Luke urged the necessity for Polly's speedy departure for the home of Dr. Caldwell. It was after two o'clock before guests and household retired to rest; and this left but little of the night, as Sheering and Luke had told their host that they must leave for Sheering's home before dawn.

Luke managed to secure a few moments before leaving in which to exchange confidences with Polly Rutherford; and the parting kiss was given in the shady recess of the vine-covered porch.

"Goodby, my precious girl; it is only for a little while—on next Thursday I will be here to guard you and Daddy Scurlock to the home of Parson Caldwell. You will see something of the ravages of the war in Guilford, for the British army has left its mark there, too. But, thank God, you will be out of the range of Fanning and Rains;" and Luke gave Polly an extra kiss as he bade her adieu.

The piece of road Sheering and Luke Stallings were to travel as they passed the cabin of Jack Rains was soft and sandy, but they also took the precaution to muffle their horses' feet with hay, so as to enable them to get by with as little noise as possible, for they were

quite sure they would find sentinels posted; and if they were discovered they might expect more than one shot in return for Luke's shot of the night before; that they were suspected, they did not doubt.

Fortunately, they reached the cabin before dawn, and the darkness favored them. They brought their horses down to a slow walk as they drew near to a large walnut tree in front of the cabin, and Luke's keen eyes saw a dark object crouching close to the trunk of the tree, and the flash of a spark from a pipe revealed to both of them a sentry not thirty steps from them.

"There he is," said Luke; "they are watching for us."

Another flash of the pipe revealed the sentry in a standing position and listening, as if he heard some sound in the road.

"Put spurs to 'Sorrel Top,' Luke, and follow me," was Sheering's whispered order; and his horse leaped forward and was soon dashing up the white sand behind him, enveloping both of them in a thick cloud of dust.

"Sorrel Top" followed Sheering's horse, and his movements were greatly quickened by a sudden flash and the crack of a rifle, followed by another and yet another; but the balls all flew wide of their mark, and although some of Fanning's gang followed the retreating sound of horses as far as the forks of the road, more than two miles away, the early dawn brought them no view of the enemy, and they returned to Rains' cabin only to report that Sheering and Luke Stallings had passed and got away.

"The devil, you say; is that the best you can do, Steve Walker?—you've got to mend your holt," said Rains, in a tone of anger.

"How far does Charley Sheering live from here, Rains?" questioned Fanning.

"Only about seven miles, Colonel."

"I will attend to that gentleman myself, Rains; and you may go along to see it well done. Sheering is too daring a leader of men to live; I think Walker will do good work when he begins."

"All right, Colonel, I'll go with ye any night ye name, for I shall feel more comfortable when that job's done."

The following night was deemed a suitable one for Fanning's purpose, and, saddling their horses, he and Rains rode away in the direction of Charley Sheering's home a little after ten o'clock. As they rode along, Fanning gave Rains a clear idea of his plans.

"You see, Rains, we must proceed with caution. Every man has his friends, and some of the Whigs have good friends among the Tories. Where that's the case, if it doesn't cost our cause too much, we will let them be, or we will just take such fellows prisoners and send 'em to Wilmington. We must make a bloody example of some, and I've determined that Charley Sheering shall be 'scapegoat' for a beginning. Kill a few prominent Whigs and we will strike terror into the heart of the rebellious, and cause the neutrals to lay low and do nothing to help the other side. I am determined every man shall show his hand and play fair. No dodging about the bush; and, as soon as I get men enough armed and equipped, I shall do a few things that will startle the Province, for this is no general muster business, this is war."

"It's killin' and foragin', at any rate," said blunt Jack Rains, and he came nearer the truth than did Fanning.

Reaching Charles Sheering's home, Fanning left his horse with Rains, and silently approached the house. There was no light about the place, and every indication that the inmates of the house were asleep.

With a deep voice, once heard never forgotten, he demanded entrance and asked for Charley Sheering.

"He is not at home," replied a female voice; "what do you want with him at this hour of the night?"

"I owe him a score and wish to settle it; open the door or I shall come in without your bidding, madam."

The door was speedily opened, and the stalwart form of Fanning crossed the threshold and stood in the presence of a pale, delicate-looking woman of fragile form, almost perfect features, and dauntless spirit.

"What did you say you wanted with my husband?" she again questioned.

"That is a matter between us alone, madam; where is he?"

"I know not; and did I know you could never find out from me unless I knew your business, sir. This is unhandsome in you, a stranger, to disturb me at this unseemly hour."

"The King's business requireth haste, madam; and I must see your husband."

"Find him, then, for I tell you I know not where he is."

"I will not be slow to do that, madam," replied Fanning, as he began poking the barrel of his rifle among the heaps of bed-clothes and behind the garments hung on pegs against the wall. "If he is in the house I will find him; if in the out-houses, I shall also find him; so you had as well tell. You are a beautiful woman, although a little pale and worried now; you would make a winsome widow."

"Out of this house, sir; I tell you my husband is not here; go elsewhere and find him."

"You are devilish spunky at any rate; I will take your word that he is not secreted in the house, and will now seek him in some of his hiding holes. When I find him you will be sure to know it; I will fire a salute. Good-night, madam;" and, making a bow, Fanning passed out.

The cow-shed and stable were next searched, with no result, and Fanning began to fear that his wary enemy had eluded him, when he bethought him of a small crib which stood in a corner of the barnyard. Creeping up, he peeped through a wide space between the logs, and discovered some object lying on the floor, but in the darkness he found it difficult to determine whether it was a pile of sacks or a human being. His eye becoming accustomed to the dim starlight, he believed at last he had found the object of search; and, taking deliberate aim, fired.

There was no movement of the object nor a groan; so Fanning waited not for further information, but, in the firm belief that he had slain an enemy of the King, mounted his horse and, accompanied by Jack Rains, rode rapidly away.

The agonized wife on hearing the rifle shot, fearless of danger, left her little children, who were still sleeping and oblivious of her trouble, and rushed out into the little inclosure around the cabin just in time to see two men ride away.

At this moment Luke Stallings, who had also been in hiding some distance from the cabin, came up to her, saying: "Mrs. Sheering, who fired that shot? Where is Charley?"

"I have just come out to find him, Luke. A strange

man has been here searching for him, and I fear he found him and has done him harm. Oh, what is a poor woman to do in these awful times?"

"That's Fanning, Mrs. Sheering; he's shot Charley, and we must find him."

Just then they heard a low voice calling: "Hannah, Luke, come and help me; I'm badly wounded."

"Why, he's in the crib, Luke," said Hannah Sheering; and they were not long in getting to where he lay with an ugly wound through his neck, the ball having cut its way out between his windpipe and neck-bone.

"Poor fellow!" exclaimed Luke; "I'll get even with them on this night's job. Can you raise up, Charley?—wait, let me staunch that wound with my handkerchief. Now, Mrs. Sheering, you get on one side of him and I the other, and we'll get him into the house."

"No," said Sheering, "in the fix I am I mustn't stay here, for I can't fight and the gang may come back. Go with me over to Corneal Tyson's, Luke; I will then get my neck spliced by Doctor Tony Sidebottom, and be in some sorter shape to fight them devils. If Fanning thinks he's done me up for good he's a long way off from the truth."

"Stop crying, Mrs. Sheering," said Luke; the ball has never been moulded that will kill Charley. I'll take him over to Tyson's, leave him there, and then come back here to stay until tomorrow night. If you want to go over to your Uncle Tyson's I'll come back for you and the children and see you safely there, so cheer up a bit."

Mrs. Sheering was a plucky woman, and, seeing how bright and resolved her husband was, began at once to prepare him for the journey of eight miles, determining that she would follow him under Luke's escort the next day.

CHAPTER V

FANNING CAPTURES CHATHAM COURT

The news of the murderous assault upon Charles Sheering spread through the County of Chatham, and aroused a feeling of more determined resistance on the part of the Whigs, while it emboldened the Tories to undertake many lawless deeds, causing serious destruction of property and the loss of many valuable lives.

Luke Stallings went with his friend Sheering on the night he was shot, over to the home of Cornelius Tyson, reaching there before daylight; and did not leave until he had assisted Doctor Tony Sidebottom in cleansing and stitching up the ugly wound that had well-nigh cost the life of a true patriot. Returning to Sheering's home, he found Hannah Sheering all ready to depart. Even the pack horse was laden with such articles of necessity as she should need for a prolonged stay, and little baby Sarah and sturdy master Cornelius were dressed and ready for the journey.

"Bless my life, Hannah Sheering, did you accomplish all this work by yourself?—you should have waited till I came," was Luke's salutation.

"Hannah Sheering never waits, Luke;" was her cheerful reply. "How did you leave Charley?"

"Oh, don't worry about Charley, Hannah; he's as bright as a new guinea, and as fierce as a lizard. There's lots of fight in Charley yet; but surely you

must be broken down—go and rest a while before you undertake that eight miles."

"I do not need to, Luke; women are made of leather-wood and spring-steel. Come in and get a bite to eat and we will start, for I am anxious to reach Uncle Tyson's before dark."

"You are a game one, Hannah; if all the women were like you I should venture on marrying even in war-time. But Charley Sheering took the pick of Brush Creek."

"Suppose I were to tell Polly Rutherford you said that, Luke?"

"Suppose you was; I would tell her, as I often have, that the best women I knew were married, and her only chance to be your equal is to marry, and to marry me."

"You saucy fellow! If you get that girl, you will get the pick of Brush Creek and no mistake; and if you do I believe you would be some account, Luke. Come along now, and eat, for if you begin to talk about Polly Rutherford you will talk until sundown."

Luke took his seat at a pine table under the shade of a large oak, his seat being a round block resting on three legs; and Hannah took another like it, holding baby Sarah in her lap. They partook of a meal consisting of a huge wooden bowl of mush; a dish of broiled middling; fresh milk, with clean, bright gourds for glasses; and hot Indian pone with hoe-cakes of rye flour.

Luke told Hannah of the visit Polly Rutherford intended making to the Caldwells' for it seems that neither he nor her husband had told Hannah before of their adventurous night at Rains' cabin, and of all they had learned there.

"You see, Hannah," said Luke, "this Fanning has

gathered about him the worst men in Chatham County; he says he holds a commission from King George, and means to make every man show his hand, and every rebel woman shut her mouth. 'Tain't safe for Polly Rutherford to stay within reach of that gang; and I am going over to Daddy Scurlock's, and, Thursday morning before day, he, Polly Rutherford and me will start for Guilford. It will take until Saturday night to make the trip, if we have no interruptions, and that gang don't get wind of it and try to stop us. Fanning don't want the girl to get out of reach, for he intends, if necessary, to sacrifice her liberty that he may force Daddy Scurlock to support the King's cause."

"The dastardly wretch!" said Hannah indignantly; "he wars on women and children as well as men; he may kill us, but women are never conquered, Luke."

"I believe you, Hannah; and Polly Rutherford is another one of the 'leather-wood and steel-spring' kind of women who would suffer death before dishonor."

"I am sorry for poor Daddy Scurlock, Luke; they know he's got money and that he wants to save his property for his girl; that he has no enmity to the King; and they are going to bleed him to exhaustion, I fear."

"Do you know, I've changed my mind about going to Greene's army, Hannah; I was going on to join him from Guilford, but the coming of this devil, Fanning, has changed all my plans. I am going to join Captain Bob Roper and watch and fight this scoundrel until he is driven out of the country, or I am under my native sod, and Charley is going to do the same. By being around here I can look after and help Daddy Scurlock, for he is going to have a hard time, and your worst

predictions about him will prove true, or all signs fail."

Luke and Hannah continued their talk as they journeyed by the way, Master Cornelius riding behind his mother on her husband's best horse, while Luke's fiery sorrel made no complaint at carrying baby Sarah on the saddle in front of Luke and clasped in his strong arms, but stepped proudly along as if aware that he bore a treasure.

On their arrival at the home of Hannah's uncle, Cornelius Tyson (usually called Corneal), they found the old gentleman sitting out on a wide porch shaded by two large walnut trees, his huge limbs encased in a pair of homespun linen trousers, his feet covered by a pair of deerskin slippers, his body only protected by a large, breezy-looking white linen shirt; and he wore neither coat nor waistcoat. Beside him, on a broad, oak split chair, a duplicate of that occupied by Tyson, sat Doctor Tony Sidebottom, each engaged in blowing blue curls of smoke from cob pipes of generous dimensions, and talking in a slow and deliberate way about the unhappy condition of the Province.

Dr. Tony, or "Old Sides," as his many friends called him, was what Aunt Mandy Scurlock had denominated "A borned doctor." He had been able to secure but few advantages in his early days, but a varied experience in a practice of thirty years put him far ahead of many of the "book-larned," as more modern doctors were called, and he had not his equal in fevers, breaking up heavy colds, setting broken limbs, and assisting the coming race into the world. In surgery he was considered a "past master." Having in his youth wrought laboriously at a blacksmith forge, he developed great mechanical skill, and had made with his own hands the set of saws and sharp knives with which

he performed many an operation that would make a twentieth century surgeon tremble to contemplate. "Old Sides" seemed to have no nerves and but little of the sympathetic in his tall, ungainly anatomy, but deep down below a rugged exterior there beat a warm heart, and he was frequently discovered in trying to hide some kind and generous action.

The contrast between Corneal Tyson, who pulled the beam at two hundred and forty pounds, and was nearly as broad as he was tall, and "Old Sides," who stood six feet two—a loosely jointed frame of heavy bone and muscle—was as great as was their contrast in characteristics. Tyson was a money maker—prudent, worldwise, and generally unsympathetic. His convictions were usually so deep down in his nature as to elude the search of any ordinary observer, and sentiment was ordinarily subservient to his monetary interests. He had one strong trait in his character, and that was—love for his kindred. He had but few, and this niece, Hannah Sheering, was looked upon as the future heiress of this odd old bachelor uncle. Dr. Tony Sidebottom was as blunt as the end of his big nose, and, as he was no fighting character, but mended broken heads when others fought, he had a way of saying what he pleased. His voice was sharp and thin, every word seeming to have a point to it, and both friend and enemy dreaded his tongue. Corneal Tyson and Amen Scurlock were his nearest friends. Tyson, like himself, was a bachelor, and the doctor spent many of his idle hours at "Walnut Knoll," as Tyson called his bachelor home.

As they sat smoking, Corneal began the conversation by asking the doctor as to Charley's chances for pulling through.

"That fellow shot to kill, Tony, and I am fearsome

about sich wounds. Do you think Charley will rekiver?"

"It's a close shave, Corneal; the ball passed right by the jugler, and if it had gone a quarter of an inch closter 'twould 'a' cut it spang in two and he would have bled to death in no time. As 'tis, Charley has good chances, and I look for him to be all right in a little while."

"I'm glad o' that, Tony; Charley is a good fellow, and, marryin' my niece, Hannah Tyson, ye see I take more than neighborly intrust in the case. Do all you can for him, Tony; but I don't know as 'twill do Charley much good; he is in this scrap until the close, and I am afeared will get shot again; but cure him up this time, anyhow. If he is a little short o' money, that will make no difference; you shall be paid. These is flickety times, Tony, and gold guineas is goin' to be scarce before we see 'em plenty; tharfore, make your bill reasonable on Charley."

"Corneal, if you was a-dyin' I believe you'd bargain with old Timothy Shaw at the crossroads about your coffin and grave afore you went. Now, if Charley hadn't a fip in his pocket, he'd find Tony Sidebottom right by him; and he should have jest as clost attention as if he was Gineral Washington. So don't consarn yourself about Charley Sheering, nor go to hagglin' over the price of a leetle cuttin', stitchin', and splicin'. Charley is a patriot, Corneal, and I wish we had a hundred thousand sich. King George's hosts would have to quit the country, and Fanning's gang would go with them."

"Don't get flustered, Tony; we are too old friends to fall out. I am able to pay anything you charge, and mean to do it. Charley do love his country, and so do

I, in different ways. I made my money under King George, Tony, and could get along to the end of my days without all this upstir. I allow there are grievances I would like to see rectified, and taxes is as hard on me as any man in Brush Creek settlement."

"In other words, Corneal, you love your property, not your country; while Charley is willin' to sacrifice something and get shot full of holes for the sake of liberty, and to have a government of our own makin'. I call that a darned big difference in the way you fellows love your country."

"Patriotism is as folks look at it, Tony; and I am not prepared at my time of life to sacrifice all I have made for the sake of even a good idee. If any of the Whigs got in a tight place, and a few guineas would help 'em, I don't say as I wouldn't let 'em have 'em; but my big carcass wa'n't made to stop bullets for an idee, Tony. If Charley choose to fill his-self full of lead in this Revolutionary cause, and leave a handsome young widow, I'll see to it that she and the children have a good and permanent home at Walnut Knoll; that's my patriotism, Tony."

"Well, you know our old copybooks used to have phrases set for us to write after, Corneal. One phrase was: 'Many men of many minds,' and you are not by yourself in this Province. I'm not flingin' blame on ye —you have a right to choose for yourself; but Tony Sidebottom ain't of your way of thinkin'."

"And Tony Sidebottom ain't got a smart bit o' money to lose betwix Whigs and Tories, neither," said Corneal, his round red face growing redder as he glanced at the quizzical expression with which the doctor regarded him.

"So you didn't know I was rich, Corneal? That shows how little folks know of their neighbors."

The idea of Tony Sidebottom, the friend of everybody, the servant of everybody, whether rich or poor, being rich seemed such a ridiculous idea to matter-of-fact Corneal Tyson that he broke forth into a hearty laugh. His fit of ill humor was gone in a moment, and slapping the doctor on the back he said:

"Yes, Tony, you are rich, and a devilish sight richer than old Corneal Tyson, and I shall never love you any the less for being a Whig, although I love the King. You are rich in friends, and rich even in the good will of your enemies. Some men make money, Tony; others enjoy, not the possession, but all that the money of their friends will buy. Yes, yes, you are rich as long as old Corneal Tyson lives."

While the two friends chatted, the sun had gone down behind the western hills and daylight was fast fading. It was just as Corneal had pronounced his never-failing friendship for Dr. Tony that Hannah Sheering, Luke, and the two children rode up.

"Bless my life! here's Hannah and the chickens; Luke, too," and Uncle Corneal raised his ponderous frame and slowly shuffled his way down the steps and out to the horse blocks.

Meanwhile, Luke had assisted Hannah to dismount, had lifted Master Cornelius down, and then proceeded to toss Baby Sarah into the outstretched arms of Uncle Corneal.

"Who is this, Sarah?" said the old man; and he roared with hearty laughter as the little darling patted his broad red cheeks and answered:

"My Unker Neil."

"And who is this, boy?" the old man questioned, as he took his namesake's little hand in his.

"Dat is my ittle Neil."

"Bless your sweet tongue, you shall never leave your 'Unker Neil.' Do you hear that, Hannah?" said the old man as he gave his niece a hearty kiss. "Walnut Knoll is your home henceforward; you will be safer here, and Charley must agree to closing up his home and allowing you to make a home for me in my last days, child. His home can be here, too."

"It is as Charley says, dear Uncle; and I do not think he will be unreasonable about it," replied Hannah.

So our readers must not be surprised at finding Charley Sheering's little family indefinitely domiciled at Walnut Knoll.

Not a great while had elapsed after the arrival of Hannah Sheering at Walnut Knoll before Dr. Tony Sidebottom, in his semi-weekly visitations to Charley Sheering, brought startling news of a rare exploit on the part of Fanning and his gang of marauders that produced a great sensation in Chatham County.

Reaching Walnut Knoll one morning, he had just tied "Old Blaze" at the rack, and was lifting his saddlebags from the saddle, as Corneal Tyson hailed him.

"Come in out'n the sun, 'Old Sides,' or you'll melt. What's the news?"

"Daggoned bad news, Corneal; that gang Jack Rains and Fanning got together at old Parson Rowe's meetin' house t'other Sunday are playin' the devil."

"What have they done now, Tony?"

"Oh, they hain't done a thing but captured Chatham Court bodily, lawyers and all, and are on the way to Wilmington with the whole lot."

"You don't say!"

"Yes, I do say, Corneal; it's a livin' fact, and the people of this Province have got to roust that gang, or no honest man or woman will be safe in their own bed. Here's poor Scurlock has got to send Polly Rutherford away from home to keep that lecherous wolf and his followers from carryin' her off bodily, that they may twist money out'n the old man. 'Tis a dag-goned shame, Corneal, that's what it is."

"'Twix' you and me, Tony, 'tis a shame; and I don't hold with no sich doings—if Fanning is a reg'lar officer of King George, he ought to abide by the law of the land, and when I see him I'll tell him so."

"Yes, Corneal, tell the devil to stop raisin' hell on earth—he'll mind you just as quick."

"Have Luke Stallings and Scurlock got back from Guilford, Tony?" questioned Tyson, anxious to avoid further discussion of Fanning.

"Yes, and a time of it they had gettin' there; but I won't undertake to tell that. Luke will tell ye all about it when he gets a chance to come and see Charley, I guess."

"Where's Luke now, Tony?"

"Where he ought to be, Corneal—with Captain Bob Roper, watchin' the thieves; 'tis a pity they can't get men enough together in Chatham County to capture and hang the whole gang."

"Go slow, Tony. Thar is complaints both sides. The Tories say that Phil Alston, Colonel Wade of Anson, Major Nall, and Captain Robeson treat them just as bad as they treat the Whigs; and while hangin' is too good for some of 'em, I grant you, you have got more good men to hang than they have."

"I thank ye for that word, Corneal—'More good

men to hang than they have.' I should say so. Phil Alston is worth a whole cartload of sich fellows as Jack Rains and Fanning, and Major Nall and Captain Robeson, accordin' to my knowings, are gentlemen that can't treat sich cattle as these Chatham County Tories as either equals or as deservin' of much along the line of mercy. As to Colonel Wade, he is too far away for me to know much about him, but I hain't a doubt he treats every Tory he catches a leetle better than he deserves."

"Well, Tony, we won't discuss that, for we don't altogether agree about it, you know; although, mind ye, I'm not upholdin' this plunderin', murderin' business neither side. Tell me somethin' about the capture of Chatham Court."

"There ain't much to tell, Corneal. Fanning, Jack Rains, Steve Walker, the Edwardses, and about thirty odd more made a dash into Pittsboro and just bodily took the whole court—lawyers, justices, and all; and they are now carrying them down to Wilmington as prisoners of King George. Tom Scurlock, nigh kin to Amen, is among the prisoners; and Amen is powerfully stirred up about it."

"I tell ye, Tony, this Fanning is playin' the devil with the King's cause, and is makin' Whigs out'n good Loyalists every day."

"You haven't heard the last of Fanning, Corneal; and he is goin' to give you sympathizers a reg'lar tourniquet twist afore long; then maybe you'll find out the price of bein' a friend to King George."

"Don't let's talk about it any more now, Tony; come in and get a bite of dinner and see Charley, Hannah, and the children," and ponderous Corneal Tyson led the way to the broad porch where the big armchairs awaited them.

CHAPTER VI

A PERILOUS JOURNEY

Toward sunset on the day that Dr. Tony Sidebottom brought the news of the capture of Chatham Court to Walnut Knoll, Amen Scurlock, with Aunt Mandy on her pillion behind him, was journeying toward the hospitable home of Corneal Tyson for a visit of a few days. In many of their views Scurlock and Tyson agreed, and in business matters they consulted each other as often as they had opportunity. The startling movements of Fanning and his gang had created great uneasiness among the conservative men who strove to be friendly with both sides in the controversy; and Scurlock, since his return from Guilford and since he had heard the news of the capture of his kinsman, Tom Scurlock, felt that he needed the advice and friendly counsel of Corneal Tyson, for he had great faith in his judgment.

As they jogged along the conversation between man and wife was chiefly about their daughter, Polly Rutherford, for whom they had found an asylum, not without its perils, but a much safer asylum than even her own home.

"You are sure, old man," said Aunt Mandy, "that Polly Rutherford is all safe with Parson Caldwell's folks, and that the dear child has a hearty welcome there?"

"Why, Mandy, have you forgot so far our beloved friend Caldwell as to think that our child would not be welcome under their roof? Why, she's the pet and darling of the house. All your old neighbors around Buffalo Meeting House want her to stay around with them, too; so Polly is likely to have a happy time—only Parson Caldwell is mightily hated by the Tories, and that is the only thing that keeps me at all uneasy about the gal. I know Parson Caldwell will take all the care of her he can, and it's better for her to be thar than in reach of Jack Rains and Fanning; and, old woman, that is all the comfort I can give you."

"I sometimes wish Polly Rutherford had been borned a boy, Amen; 'deed I do. I know she would have been right into this fight and might get killed if she was a boy, but to have a pretty daughter like Polly worried and harried and bedeviled by such creatures as Fanning—fearin' every day she may be run off with and foully dealt with, I declare 'tis enough to run a mother distracted."

"Don't worry, Mandy; we must do as Parson Caldwell told me to—'leave her in the hands of the Lord'—and it will all work out right. You just ought to see how trustful the Parson is when sometimes they are a-huntin' him like a partridge upon the housetop, and he has some nights to sleep in a fodder stack or up a tree in the woods. Thus far they haven't mistreated his women folks, and I don't believe they will."

"You mean a partridge in the mountains; and is that the way the Parson lives, old man?"

"I mean he is bein' hunted like a partridge. It's better sometimes than others; but they know he is true to the Continentals, and whenever they make raids like Fanning does he is sure to suffer."

"If I'd 'a' known that—— I'm monstrous uneasy about Polly Rutherford; 'deed I am, old man. But she is as safe there as here, at any rate, and we must trust the Lord. I wish she was happily married, though. Seems like married women are safer in these times than young gals."

"Don't married women have to trust the Lord, Mandy?" said Scurlock, while Aunt Mandy knew he was laughing, for she felt his sides shake.

"Oh, yes, you foolish old man; but 'tis something to have your old man to lean on when things get dangersome. Now, sir, thank me for that compliment."

"Much obliged, madam," said Scurlock, with a nod of his head. "And now tell me, who would you like Polly Rutherford to marry?"

"Her best chance, unless she finds her man among my old neighbors around Buffalo Meetin' House, is Luke Stallings; and I have thought there was something betwix' 'em, haven't you, old man?"

Aunt Mandy again felt Amen Scurlock's sides shake, and in his dry way he said solemnly:

"Not as I knows of, Mandy. How would 'Old Sides' do for Polly Rutherford?"

"Old Sides—— Tony Sidebottom marry Polly Rutherford? Why, old man, why didn't you say Corneal Tyson or Methuselah, or some of the antediluvians?"

"Well, Mandy, Corneal Tyson is too big and short winded—he is out'n the race; Methuselah is dead; but Dr. Tony Sidebottom is quite alive and very spry for his age."

"Now, old man, why don't you talk sense? If you don't stop talkin' foolishness when we begin plannin' for Polly Rutherford's future, I'll tickle you, and I'd as well begin."

Aunt Mandy's long slim fingers were soon finding their way through rolls of flesh to the ribs of her liege lord, and Amen, with a squirm that eluded her grasp, dropped from the saddle into the soft sand, much to the amazement of his quiet old riding nag. The nag stopped in the road and gazed with a puzzled air at Amen Scurlock, as, convulsed with laughter, he rolled over in the sand, while Aunt Mandy gathered up the reins, saying:

"Well, I never! S'pose you are going to walk the balance of the way?"

"Just want to walk a bit, Mandy, for a change. We are 'most to Tyson's now."

"Well, walk, then; but stop talkin' that nonsense about Old Sides and Polly Rutherford."

"Well, comin' down to serious, sober earnest, Mandy, Old Sides is a good chance for Timothy Shaw's gal, Cynthy, up at the crossroads, but not for our Polly Rutherford. That wouldn't be a bad match, Mandy. You see, Dr. Tony Sidebottom would have first chance at the folks livin', and Timothy Shaw gets the last chance at 'em when they are dead. S'posin' you kinder hint the combination to Old Sides, Mandy; you mought make the Doctor and Cynthy very happy."

"Lackaday, Amen Scurlock, who would 'a' thought of you turnin' matchmaker; but that's just splendid, and I will see how Old Sides takes to the idee."

"Mandy, you axed me when we first began talking if I didn't 'spicion somethin' betwix' Polly Rutherford and Luke."

"Well, you said you didn't."

"But I told you a fib, just for fun, you know. I been knowin' for some time that Luke loved Polly Rutherford something like I loved you; and for a long

time it didn't amount to a bunch of turnips, so far as she was consarned. That's all changed, Mandy, and Polly loves Luke better than she do you or me; and, if we have got anything ag'in' it, we had just as well try to raise ducks on syllabub as to try and stop it."

"Do you want to try and stop it, old man?"

"I can't exactly say as I do; but Polly Rutherford is the best edecated gal on Brush Creek, will have a good property, is as pretty as June roses, and she ought to marry high, Mandy. Luke's a good enough fellow, but he's as poor as a church mouse."

"Poverty is all that's ag'in' Luke, old man; and if he suits Polly Rutherford she will have enough to give them a good start. So we will just make the best of it."

"I s'posen so," said Amen, then added: "Why, here we are at Corneal's, and the dogs have found us out." For just then the pack of hounds, led by old Boxer, jumped the picket fence into the road and barked their welcome to the newly arrived.

"Been lookin' for ye ever since ye got back from Guilford," roared Corneal Tyson as he waddled out to meet his guests, followed by Dr. Tony Sidebottom. "Welcome to ye, Mandy, and to Amen, too. Come in. Ye liked to have made it all day gettin' here."

"My wife spilled me in the road," said Scurlock with a quizzical look.

"Now, old man, if you begin I'll tell it all."

"Well, not just yet, old woman. Fact is, we got so busy talkin' and settlin' the affairs of everybody that we traveled very slow, and I walked a good bit of the way. How's Charley Sheering?"

"Charley is walkin' around with his neck in a sling—holds his head a bit to one side, but he is powerful

sassy and sw'ars he'll kill Fanning if ever he gets a chance," replied Tyson.

"Charley is a man to keep his word, Corneal. I'd hate to have him say that about me," said Scurlock.

"I wish, for Hannah's sake, that Charley hadn't the enmity of the Fanning gang, Amen. The gal loves him so, and, strange to say, she upholds him in it, and says she had rather they'd bring Charley home to her dead or maimed for life than to have him run from sich a dirty crowd."

"Hannah's worth her weight in golden guineas, Corneal," said Dr. Tony. "You may 'burn the woods and sift the ashes,' as the saying goes, before you find another Hannah; and, if all the men were like her, Cornwallis' army and Fanning's gang wouldn't find room enough in North Carolina to whip a dog."

"There you go again, Old Sides; it's a wonder Rains and Fanning don't get hold of you and give you a free tramp to Wilmington."

"They are afeared they might need my services probin' for Whig bullits in their carcasses, Corneal. Ah! wouldn't I like the job of cuttin' lead out of Fanning and Jack Rains? I'd like to see the devils squirm like 'a worm in hot ashes.' "

"Come along in, all of ye; and you go tell that talk to Charley, Tony," said Tyson. "He will enjoy it. Nothin' cheers him up so much as a little abuse of the Tories. Mandy, you and Amen take seats out in the cool. Hannah will be out here directly," and Corneal waddled into the yard, calling: "Jake, you black rascal! Asleep ag'in? Come and take Mr. Scurlock's mare. Down, Boxer; you dogs are about to take the place with your yelpin' and howlin'."

Hannah Sheering was not long in coming to greet

here, and what an awful time we had on the road. You remember we left home on Thursday morning, before day, and hoped to pass Jack Rains and be out of reach of the Fanning troop before dawn. We succeeded in passing Jack Rains unobserved, and Daddy brightened up a good deal and seemed to be greatly relieved, for I could see he feared some trouble. Just as we drew near the crossroads, a little after sunrise, we saw three horses tied in front of Timothy Shaw's workshop, and Luke recognized one of them as belonging to what he called 'Fanning's gang.'

"'Is your rifle loaded, Mr. Scurlock?' asked Luke, and Daddy replied that it was. Luke then examined his own rifle and the pistols in his holsters, and we rode on up to the shop. Sitting inside the door and talking to old Timothy Shaw while he was at work on a coffin sat three men. Daddy told me afterward that the big, coarse-looking one was Steve Walker; the youngest-looking one, Jack Rains' son; and the third man was a stranger both to him and to Luke.

"We were about to ride by without halting, when Steve Walker came out, saying, 'Hello, Amen Scurlock. You needn't be in sich a devil of a hurry.' Now, wasn't that awful for him to say before a young girl, Mammy? 'But I am in a hurry,' replied Daddy; 'we have an all-day ride before us.' 'Have you any objection to company?' asked Walker. 'That depends upon the company,' replied Daddy; and I could see that he was getting mad, sure enough. 'It seems you are not very choice in the company yer daughter keeps, Scurlock; allowin' that scapegrace of a Rebel to go with her anywheres. I guess, boys, we had better take charge of him,' said Walker, calling to the others.

"I turned toward Luke, and saw that we were in

danger of a battle, and feared that some one would be killed right before my eyes. He had dropped his reins, and in each hand he held a pistol. Daddy had raised his rifle, and Steve Walker didn't like that, for he knew Daddy was a dead shot. Presently Daddy spoke out, and with no uncertain words.

" 'Steve Walker, I am a law-abiding citizen of this Province, and have never yet done anything contrary to law, but there is one thing a Scurlock never submitted to yet, and that was any meddling with his private rights. My daughter and her friend are going with me on a visit to friends up the country. Where we are going and why we are going does not concern you or anyone else. If we are allowed to proceed without your interference, we will do so; if it is necessary to enforce our rights, we will do that, and consequences rest with you.'

" 'You and your daughter can go where you please, Amen Scurlock. I want no trouble with you; but we want Luke Stallings," replied Walker.

" 'It will take more men than you have here to get him,' said Luke. 'I have not molested you, but have been threatened by your gang. Come, Mr. Scurlock, let me kill two of them; you can manage Walker; and they are right handy where Timothy Shaw can take their measures.'

"Luke was just as cool, Mammy, as a cucumber in spring water; and those cowardly bullies knew they had met their match. I sat there trembling, but I was not scared, Mammy. Then Daddy said, in that cool way he has, 'Don't fire until I tell you, Luke; I will give them another chance to keep the peace. Have you finished your business with Timothy Shaw, Steve Walker?'

" 'We have a right to be at Timothy Shaw's,' he replied; and began to finger his rifle trigger.

"Luke cocked both of his pistols. 'I grant that you have a right to be here or anywhere,' continued Daddy, 'provided your being there or here isn't for the purpose of lawless deeds. Luke Stallings is my traveling companion and is going with me. I am not going to have you and your gang dogging my steps on the road. Mount, all three of you, and take the back track. When Amen Scurlock wants your company he will let you know.'

"Old Timothy Shaw had listened to all that had passed without a word, and he now spoke, saying, with a shake of his grizzled head and beard, 'Amen Scurlock is in the right, Steve Walker; he has always been a law-abiding citizen, and I want no blood shed at my shop. Just mount your horse and leave peaceably, or there is sure to be trouble.'

"Walker's eyes snapped as he said, 'You are a chicken-hearted devil, Tim; always was. Now, Amen Scurlock, remember, Colonel Fanning will have a score to settle ag'in' ye for harboring Luke Stallings, a rebel ag'in' His Majesty, King George; and we will see both'n ye when you come back.' With these last words they mounted their horses and scurried off by the road we had come, leaving us, at least temporarily, a safe road for our journey.

"That night we reached the home of Daddy's old Quaker friend on Sandy Creek, in Randolph. His name was Aaron Goodman; his wife was Ruhamah Gray, from near Buffalo Meeting House; and they had a son named Gershom and a daughter, about my age, named Hepsebah. Gershom is quite a good-looking young man, but he tries to look as old as his father,

and looks like one of the patriarchs in his sad-colored clothes. Hepsebah is a pretty, quaint-looking little creature, and has life enough in her, if she was not thee'd and thou'd to death. The night we spent there Hepsebah had a quilting, and the fun I had in watching those Quaker folk trying to enjoy themselves without making a noise made me forget the perils of the way. Hepsebah, or 'Hepsy,' as I called her, took a great liking to me, and I think Aaron and Ruhamah were a little bit glad to see me go, because they feared that I might give Hepsy a few enlarged ideas about the pleasures to be seen outside of a Quaker family.

"They had an apple-paring match—a match to see who could pick the most seed from a sack of cotton placed by the side of each one—winding up with a candy pulling. I did get them to try a game of 'forfeits,' and the young people enjoyed redeeming the forfeits very much. There was a handsome young fellow there named Harlan Howell, who was deeply in love with Hepsy; and she would have encouraged him but for her parents; so I determined to give them a chance, as I imposed all the penalties. Harlan had pledged his new jack-knife, and was anxious for his opportunity to repossess it, determined to face the strongest penalty I could impose. Fortunately, Aaron and Ruhamah were not in the room at the time, so I dared to say, 'The owner of this pledge must kneel to the wittiest, bow to the prettiest, and kiss the girl he loves best.' There was a profound silence for a moment, everyone looking at Harlan with wonder and curiosity. He arose, his face about the color of our reddest hollyhock; kneeled to me, Mammy—you see, I was the wittiest—then he crossed over to where Hepsy sat blushing, bowed to her, and then gave her a rousing

kiss right upon her soft red lips. Oh! Oh! Oh! was heard from more than a dozen voices, while Hepsy, with a bound, was out of the room and hid herself for fully half an hour in the lilac bushes. Harlan Howell put his jack-knife in his pocket and resumed his seat as if nothing very remarkable had happened; but I slept with Hepsy that night, and from something she said in her sleep I think that kiss made a match.

"Luke helped me to entertain the young people, and I venture to assert, Mammy, that Aaron and Ruhamah never saw young folks have as much fun or laugh as heartily in all their lives before.

"The following day we took leave of our Quaker friends with mutual good wishes. I shook hands with Gershom and gave his hand a good grip, but it felt as clammy as a toad, and I let it go very quickly. I kissed dear little Hepsy and whispered to her, 'I knew it was not as sweet as the one she had last night,' and she blushed very sweetly, but didn't deny my saying.

"Daddy told me that we would spend one more night on the road, and as we knew not with certainty where that would be, and as we were drawing nearer to the track along which Cornwallis' army had marched, I could not help feeling nervous. Toward sunset we reached an old farmhouse well shaded by apple and cherry trees, with a long well sweep in the center of a little grass plot between the house and the main road. It was a restful-looking spot, and I suggested that it would be a quiet place to spend the night. 'So it would, daughter,' said Daddy; and, dismounting, he approached the picket fence and called.

"Presently an old woman wearing a high ruffled cap and short gray linsey gown came to the little porch and said, 'Who be you and what do ye want?' Daddy

told her his name and Luke's, too, and that I was his daughter, and, being tired, we desired rest for the night. The old lady wore silver-rimmed spectacles and her cheeks were smooth and pink, her hair white and curly, and her smile was very winning as she answered our request. 'We have frequently to give shelter, friends, and I cannot say thee nay; come in. My only son is away with Greene's army, and I live alone with my servants. I know not thy siding in this unhappy war, but we are Continentals.'

" 'Then we shall feel safe,' said Daddy. 'My daughter is very loyal to her people, and Luke here is going to join a Continental troop. I am getting old, madam, and prefer no active part in the struggle.'

" 'Ye are all welcome; as to your being safe, that depends on whether Fields and his raiders happen to pass this way to-night. The Tories bear me no good will, friends, because my son, John Paisly, is a colonel in Greene's army; and when their marauding exploits lead them along this road they seem to take delight in destroying my property.'

" 'It's only cowardly natures that injure and despoil women, madam,' said Luke. 'I hope you will be spared a visitation to-night, but I cannot stand by and see you maltreated, and, come what will, shall defend you.'

" 'You are a brave-looking lad, but I fear the Tories would be too many for ye; they do their cowardly work in squads, striving to make up in number what they lack in bravery. Let us hope their emprises lead them elsewhere to-night. Come and refresh yourselves with a little cool water, for supper will soon be ready.' Mrs. Ruth Paisly led me into a small room opening into her own, where I found a couch with snowy coverlet; an easy, rush-bottom chair; a small mirror hung against

the wall; and a noggin of cool, fresh water, with large towels hanging on a rack nearby. 'Make thyself tidy, child,' she said, 'and then come out to the cook.om, where supper will be waiting,' and the sweet old lady vanished into her own room like a graceful shadow. The presence of that sweet old lady, Mammy, is ever with me. She was so genial, so bright, and bore the ills of life so beautifully.

"We had finished supper more than an hour, and were chatting pleasantly out on the little porch, when the old lady gave a start and exclaimed, 'Oh! I fear they are coming! I hear the tramp of horses and the clank of sabres. Chloe! Chloe! come here.' Her call was answered by the appearance around the corner of the porch of a negress of gigantic proportions, who asked in strong tones, not unlike the voice of a man, 'What you want, Old Miss?'

"'Don't you hear those horses, Chloe? I fear 'tis another raid.' 'I hears 'em, marm; you lef' 'em to me;' and the old giantess started off down to the little gate that led out into the road. Meanwhile, Daddy and Luke got their firearms and told Mrs. Paisly they were determined no intruder should enter her home that night.

"We could hear the horsemen when they halted, and could even hear the conversation between their leader and Chloe; while Luke, armed with pistols and rifle, crept through the shrubbery down near to the gate, that he might ascertain the number of the raiding party. Their leader called out to Chloe as they drew rein—and there were just five in the party, 'Well, old witch, who have ye got at home to-night? Any Rebs around?' 'What you axe me dat fur? What I know 'bout Rebs? Dar's nobody at home 'ceptin' Old Miss and a lady

friend and an old gent and a young chap.' 'Whar are these folks from, old witch?' 'None ob my business, Captain Field, and I ain't axed; but 'tis my opinion you better not mess wid 'em—dey looks like folks what don't meddle wid folks, and don't take no foolishness.' 'They do! I reckon we had better look arter them a bit, boys. Dismount and we will interview them.' Just then we heard Luke challenge them, saying, 'Halt, men! I know not who you are, but we are guests of Mrs. Paisly for the night, and do not intend to have her home invaded and searched. Let me tell you there are enough of us here to get away with your whole party, and unless you go away at once we will fire on you.' 'That's heavy bluff,' said the voice of Field, 'but we don't respond to any such call. Who are you, anyway?' 'I don't know as that is any of your business; we are traveling on affairs that concern neither King nor country, and only ask to be peaceably let alone. Daddy Scurlock, bring your men down.'

"There was a heavy tramp of feet, for Mrs. Paisly had sent to the quarter for six stalwart negro men; and in the moonlight, as they came tramping down the path, each with a hoe on his shoulder, they gave the appearance of a squad of well-armed men. 'By gosh, boys, the old witch has lied to us,' exclaimed Fields, 'and we had better mount our creatures and git.' So before Daddy and his darky recruits reached the gate, Fields and his squad were scurrying down the road at a full gallop, and we were left to enjoy a peaceful and restful night.

"The next afternoon, before sundown, we reached Parson Caldwell's, and Aunt Rachael gave us a hearty greeting. Not long after we reached there the dear old parson got home from one of his pastoral visita-

tions, and from mending the broken leg of another parishioner; and, although he was worn out bodily, he gave daddy such a hug and me such a rousing kiss that Luke exclaimed, 'Gracious! how I would like to be a parson.' Give my love to all my friends, Mammy; and, while I am enjoying myself ever so much, let me know the earliest time I can return to my beloved home.

"Your dutiful daughter,
"POLLY RUTHERFORD SCURLOCK."

CHAPTER VII

FANNING VISITS CORNEAL TYSON

"That job of capturin' Chatham Court was a neat un, Colonel," said Jack Rains, as Fanning, Steve Walker, and a few choice spirits of the gang were gathered in the Rains cabin.

"That is but a circumstance, Jack," replied Fanning. "Our next swoop will paralyze rebellion in this Province, I'm thinking; but I must have another mount. Didn't you say Corneal Tyson had some fine horses?"

"He have, for a fact, Colonel; and the stingy old devil ought to show his loyalty by presenting you with his famous gelding, 'Red Buck.'"

"Suppose, then, we ride over to Tyson's to-morrow. I am going to test his loyalty as well as his hospitality. We will also go around by Charley Sheering's place and see if there are any signs of life about there."

"Did you know, Colonel, that Sheering's wife was Corneal Tyson's niece and prospective heir?"

"No, is that a fact?"

"Yes, 'tis a fact; but old Corneal don't hold with Charley Sheering's rebellious notions, and, they tell me, gives him the blunt end of his mind about it. At any rate, we will know more by to-morrow this time than we do now, so I'll post guard, and then ye can turn in for the night."

The following morning Fanning, Rains, and Walker

rode away in the direction of Charley Sheering's home soon after daylight, reaching the deserted spot about nine o'clock.

"High! Rains! the place is deserted; nobody at home," exclaimed Fanning as he tied his horse and dismounted. "I wonder," he continued, "if I did kill the rebellious rascal?"

"I doubt it, Colonel. Sheering's like a cat—got nine lives—and is liable to turn up most any time when we ain't a-lookin'; and I'd 'bout as soon meet the devil."

"I believe Sheering's the only man you are afraid of, Rains."

"I'm not afeard of him, hand to hand, Colonel, but he fights fast and furious. I'm afeard of his quickness, and you had better be—if ever he gets a pull at yer you are a goner."

"Well, he is a goner, at any rate, for 'tis certain no one lives here, Rains. One of old Parson Rowe's nests is broken up."

"I'm afeard, Colonel, old Parson Davy is a leetle rocky in his loyalty, for while he preaches King George, he sympathizes with a damned Whig if he happens to get the punishment he deserves at our hands. I'm watchin' the old fellow."

"Never do you mind about Parson Davy, Rains; he is true at heart, and there are other folks we want to watch more than he. There's Scurlock; his loyalty isn't worth a cuss, and I am going to twist a hundred guineas out of his buckskin pouch before I leave Brush Creek, or my name's not David Fanning. He shall pay well to be left in quiet possession of his comfortable home, or he will learn how easily light wood kindles a fire."

"Oh, I been watchin' Scurlock, Colonel; he and that old hag, Mandy, is at Corneal Tyson's now, a-visitin'. They think they are safe under his loyal roof, as thar roof warn't anything but a rebel harbor, and they were afeard we would pay 'em a visit."

"I told 'em we would do that thing, when Scurlock and that scamp, Luke Stallings, was a-carryin' Polly Rutherford away," said Steve Walker.

"Leave all that to me, boys," said Fanning; "we need money for our campaign expenses, I need another fine horse, and Scurlock and Tyson must furnish them. See how smoothly I will manage it all. But let us leave this desolate spot and ride on to Tyson's; he dines early, does he not, Rains?"

"He do, Colonel, and rations is abundant. Forward is the word," replied Rains.

About eleven o'clock Fanning and his followers rode up to the horse rack in front of Corneal Tyson's gate. The tramp of their horses and clank of their sabres brought old Boxer and the whole pack of hounds out into the road, and their yelping and barking, mingled with the trumpet voice of Tyson, made "confusion worse confounded."

"Down, down, Boxer! Dad blame the dogs!" and Tyson, seizing a large wagon whip that hung on the porch, soon produced a pop, pop, that scattered the dogs in every direction.

Soon his stout frame stood in the presence of the much-talked-of Fanning, as he bade his guests welcome. "Tie your horses and come in, gentlemen. Howdy do, Colonel Fanning. Howdy, Jack. Howdy, Steve. Ye are jest in time for dinner, and, as luck would have it, I've got a squirrel stew. First we've had; little early for squirrels, ye know."

"You must know my weakness, Mr. Tyson; I am very fond of squirrels, and, when frost comes in the fall, the most toothsome meat is 'possum," said Fanning.

"You are a jedge of meats, Colonel. Come in, all un ye, and take a wash. Here, Jake! 'Sleep again, you black rascal? Fetch a bucket of cool water and fill them noggins afore you take the hosses."

While the dusty riders were making their ablutions at the further end of the porch, two confabs were going on inside. Hannah was engaged in dishing up the squirel stew, as Aunt Mandy entered, saying, "Land sakes, child! who do ye think has come to dinner?"

"Dr. Tony, I guess," said Hannah.

"No, child; it's three of the Old Boy's own—Fanning, Jack Rains, and Steve Walker."

"Oh, Aunt Mandy! what shall I do? I can never sit at the table with these creatures, never."

"You needn't to, child; just stay in the cookroom and with Charley; and, for the land's sake, don't let him know Fanning is here, or we will have trouble. I will attend to the table and carry in everything."

Daddy Scurlock had been on the porch and had seen Fanning and his followers as they came up the road, and, preferring to meet them a little later, he had gone into Charley Sheering's room to prepare him for the coming of their enemy, and to endeavor to persuade him to remain quietly in his room until their visit should be over.

"I thought I heard the tramp of horses, Daddy Scurlock. Did any one come? What were the hounds making all that fuss for?" asked Charley.

"I am going to tell ye, Charley, but you must promise me to stay right here and not try to see the visitors."

"Suppose I won't promise you, Daddy Scurlock?"

"Then you will have to stay anyhow, Charley, for in the fix you be I am stronger than you are."

"What do you mean, Daddy Scurlock?"

"I mean that Fanning, Jack Rains, and Steve Walker are here to dinner, and you must not let them know that you are here. I think they have a purpose in coming, and, if they get what they come for, they will leave before sunset. You keep quiet, Charley, and I will tell you all about their visit when they are gone."

"If I were only strong and able to battle, I fear me your good advice would not be taken, Daddy Scurlock; but I have no choice. My lack of strength bids me heed your judgment. Oh, for strength to punish that trio of scoundrels!"

"Have patience, Charley; that trio will meet their doom in God's time. Keep quiet; I must go out and see those fellows before dinner."

Daddy Scurlock walked out on the porch and found Corneal Tyson chatting with Colonel Fanning, while Steve Walker and Jack Rains were engaged in a low conversation that was not intended for other ears; but, as Scurlock drew near, he heard Jack Rains say, "I believe he is hid here, right here, and old Corneal Tyson will bear watchin', too."

Scurlock extended his hand to Colonel Fanning, and then to Rains and Walker, saying, "Howdy do, all," and quietly took one of the big split-bottom chairs.

"So you've got back from up country, Amen?" said Walker with a wicked leer.

"Don't you see I have?" replied Scurlock bluntly.

"All didn't come back that went. What did ye do with the darter and Luke?"

"I think you have got a lot of impudence, Steve Walker; when they fetched you up, manners was left out. My darter is where she intended to go, and Luke is attending to his own affairs. Pity you don't profit by his example."

Colonel Fanning had caught the tone of Amen Scurlock's voice, and plainly saw that the old man was getting vexed; and this was not in accord with Fanning's policy for that day.

Turning toward them, he said, "Walker, you seem to be like a porcupine to-day. Shove in your stickers and look pleasant. You must not offend Mr. Scurlock. Mr. Tyson was just discussing horses with me, and after dinner we are to have a look at all his stock. With good company and a royal, loyal dinner, everybody should be in a good humor. You are a good judge of horses, are you not, Mr. Scurlock?"

"Middlin' fair, Colonel. I know a thoroughbred from a Conestoga," was Daddy Scurlock's reply.

"Well, come in to dinner, all un ye. Come this way, Colonel," and Corneal Tyson led the way out into a long back porch, cool and shady, where Aunt Mandy had, with Hannah's help, spread the bountiful board that there awaited the guests.

Aunt Mandy was seated at the head of the table, and made a bow to each guest as his name was called. Sleepy Jake stood behind her, ready to pass the gourds of cider as she poured them from a huge earthenware pitcher, and to pass the wooden platters on which was served each guest's portion of squirrel stew; while wooden spoons of home manufacture, but daintily carved, conveyed the steaming stew to their ready mouths.

The cider was brisk and sparkling, the stew flavored

to the liking of an epicure, the potatoes baked brown, the apples well roasted and spiced, the okra, cucumbers and onions all seemed to aggravate already eager appetites; and during the meal there was but little talking done, but all present seemed to be getting into a good humor with themselves and their neighbors, at least outwardly. This was just as wily Corneal intended; he knew that nothing put even a savage nature so much at the mercy of good nature as a good dinner, and he felt sure that when they arose to smoke their pipes on the shady front porch all would be in a more genial humor than when the feast began. Fanning grew quite jolly as the spiced sweet potato pudding and foaming gourds of milk were served, and proposed to drink the health of the only lady at the table.

"I know you do not love the King nor our cause, Mrs. Scurlock; but here's to your good health, anyhow, for you know how to serve a dainty meal, and we are your debtors to-day."

"I don't like yer much, Aunt Mandy; but, considerin' of this dinner, I drinks yer health," said Jack Rains.

Aunt Mandy bowed toward Colonel Fanning, saying, "Many thanks to ye, Colonel. I am pleased that the dinner is to yer taste, but I have no liking for your King. If he will only let us alone, I would like him prime. As to you, Jack Rains, no woman has ever yet thriven by your likes and dislikes, not even young Jack's mother; so I shall not grieve for your good opinion."

"Now, Aunt Mandy, don't be so hard on a fellow. I used to think you was the finest woman on Brush Creek, but you have turned ag'in' us so hard," said Rains.

"That ain't so, Jack Rains; 'tis you and Steve Walker

and that crowd that have turned on your very neighbors, and I wanted a chance to tell Colonel Fanning to his face what a sneakin' thing it was to shoot poor Charley Sheering like he had been a dog."

Fanning's face flushed, while Aunt Mandy's cheeks were aflame and her eyes almost flashed fire. It seemed as if Fanning's scheme for a jolly and profitable business was about to be upset; but Corneal Tyson was equal to the emergency.

Clapping his huge palms together with a loud smack, he exploded into a deep, rumbling laugh, saying, as he caught his breath, "Dad blame me, but you are too much for any man, Aunt Mandy. Colonel, you had better let her be and come along and take a look at the hosses; she'd have her say if the devil was a-standin' by."

"And why shouldn't I, for he *is* a-standin' by," said Aunt Mandy, while the men arose one by one and followed Tyson into the front porch and out of the front gate to a pasture not more than three hundred yards from the house.

On their way to the pasture Amen Scurlock drew near to Fanning and said, "Let them pass on. I want a word with you. You will please excuse Mandy, Colonel, for the way she spoke at dinner, for when she talks about the shootin' of Charley Sheering she gets wild and don't care what she says nor where she says it."

"You ought to try and restrain her, Mr. Scurlock, or she will bring you a world of trouble. For your sake I am disposed to overlook it; but, considering how she spoke to me, an officer of King George, you ought to make amends by a handsome donation to the King's cause."

"And so I will, Colonel. How much do you need at this time? Remember, gold is scarce."

"In consideration of that," said Fanning, "I will stint the cause and only ask of you one hundred guineas. Let me have that, and help us on occasionally hereafter, and I will overlook the disloyalty of your wife. The struggle will not last long now, and when we succeed in crushing the rebellion you will be one of the rich and favored citizens of the Province."

"That's a mighty heap of gold, Colonel, and taxes are prodigious. Couldn't you make it fifty guineas?"

"I could not and do justice to King and country, Mr. Scurlock. Give me the hundred, and I will not call on you again if I can possibly avoid it."

"It's a heavy dreen, Colonel, and cramps me powerfully, but you shall have the gold," and reaching back into a capacious hip pocket, Scurlock produced a buckskin bag, saying, "You'll find an even hundred guineas there, Colonel; and I hope the gold will be used to bring a speedy peace and put an end to all this plunderin' and bloodshed on both sides. And while we are a-talkin' on this subject, Colonel, let me tell ye you were a leetle rough on Charley Sheering, and Steve Walker is watchin' a chance to take underhanded advantage of Luke Stallings. I don't deny that they is both Whigs and good fighters, but they be open-handed, and won't do a sneakin' thing."

"How can you say that, Mr. Scurlock? Who but Sheering or Stallings could have shot at me that night at Rains'?"

"And weren't you at Rains' plottin' ag'in' their lives that very minute? Besides, Colonel, you don't know 'em like I do. If Luke or Charley shot at ye, intendin' to kill ye, you'd 'a' been six feet under ground now.

They only gave ye a warnin' what to expect when they got ye out into the open."

"Well, what do you expect me to do for your Rebel friends, Scurlock?"

"Treat 'em fair, Colonel; don't go to thar homes and burn and shoot, but fight 'em like men; and, if you capture 'em, treat 'em as prisoners should be treated. Remember, they catch your boys sometimes, and if you expect mercy you should show mercy. It's just dreadful the way you all are a-doin' one another."

"I see you know but little about war, Mr. Scurlock."

"And I want to know less, Colonel; war is the fires of the pit turned loose."

"Well, Mr. Scurlock, I will try and be no harder on your friends than I can help; but you must help King George to keep his own and try to keep your women folk straight. Come on now and we will see the horses."

Thus saying, Colonel Fanning walked rapidly forward until he had overtaken Corneal Tyson and the others, while Amen Scurlock followed slowly, his hand feeling his empty pocket while he murmured, "Five hundred in solid gold gone. I fear Mandy's tongue will be my ruin before this bloody war is over."

Corneal Tyson, in honor of his visitors, wore a loose linen sack over his white homespun linen shirt that day, and in the huge pockets he had something like a peck of oats mixed with salt. At his call, three fine brood mares, each with a young foal by her side, gathered around him, followed a little more timidly by three beautiful blood-bay geldings.

As they shyly arched their necks and watched the strangers, sometimes startled by some movement on the part of a visitor, they displayed such grace in action

as to call forth exclamations from every one present. Fanning seemed greatly surprised, and exclaimed, "Splendid stock, Mr. Tyson; never saw finer. How old is that one?"—pointing to the largest of the geldings.

"Five year old this spring, Colonel. That's 'Red Buck,' and he can almost fly."

"A noble animal, Mr. Tyson. You could not better avouch your loyalty to King George than by presenting Red Buck to his cause."

"Red Buck is worth fifty guineas, Colonel."

"Aye, I should say so; but what is fifty guineas when you consider all that our King's government has enabled you to accumulate, Mr. Tyson? You should be proud of furnishing a mount to an officer of the King."

"And pray what officer would it be, and how would the King know or care that old Corneal Tyson had given the cause a horse worth fifty guineas?"

"Trust me for that, Mr. Tyson. I should ride that horse in the King's service; and, my word for it, this act of loyalty shall reach King George's ear."

"Thar are other ears 'twould reach, too, Colonel, and I don't crave the notariety. I am loyal, and Brush Creek knows it; but as good men as I am are Whigs. They respect me, I respect them. What I do for the King I prefer to do in my way. Step this way, Colonel Fanning."

Colonel Fanning followed Tyson to one side, and the stout old man's big popped eyes blinked in a funny way as he said, "I am particular in all I do, Colonel, and 'tain't nobody's business but our'n about this hoss. I don't want it norated through the country that Corneal Tyson has given his best hoss to Colonel Fanning. You jest hand over to me, whar those folks yonder can

see, fifty guineas. The hoss is your'n, and afore you leave I'll pass back the gold to ye, and there's an end on it. See! the gold goes to the King's cause."

Fanning caught at Tyson's cunning ruse, for it placed him in the light of a purchaser for a very fine animal, and shielded his friend Tyson from the wrath that would have been kindled against him by the more impetuous of the Whigs.

"I see you are quite a diplomat, Mr. Tyson, and you have chosen a wiser way than I suggested;" and reaching into an inside pocket, Fanning produced the identical buckskin bag he had received from Amen Scurlock, and proceeded to count out into Tyson's broad palms half of the hundred shining guineas.

Amen Scurlock, Steve Walker, and Jack Rains watched the horse trade with deep interest, although they were too far away to get at the particulars.

"Bless your soul! they are tradin'," said Steve. "Ketch old Corneal givin' that hoss, no, sir!"

"The Colonel must have made a big raise unbeknownst to us," said Rains. "See, he's countin' out shiners like they was comin' from the mint."

Amen Scurlock kept his own counsel, but he knew well where fifty of his hundred guineas were going, and so silent and careful was Corneal Tyson that it was many months before Amen Scurlock learned from him the nature of that "Hoss Trade."

Toward sunset the visitors, refusing to spend the night, took their departure, taking the direction of Jack Rains' cabin. Fanning rode away on Red Buck; while Steve Walker, mounted on Fanning's other horse, led his own. Aunt Mandy watched their departure with infinite delight, singing to Hannah as a turn in the road hid them from view:

A Remarkable Horse Trade

"Joy go with you, peace behind you,
And the devil take you,
In his own good time."

Fanning's comment on the day was made to himself; he had no confidants.

"A fifty guinea horse and one hundred shiners—a pretty good day's work."

CHAPTER VIII

SKIN QUARTER

About a week after the visit of Fanning and his followers, Aunt Mandy, who was the moving spirit in her household, began to get ready for a return to their home, which was known on Brush Creek as Skin Quarter.

When she first spoke of it, Corneal Tyson uttered a strong protest. "Now, Aunt Mandy, you don't need to go; and I am sure Hannah needs yer good counsel. Skin Quarter is a-standin' just whar you left it, and old Juba is makin' the niggers work all right."

"That's easy to say, Corneal, but in these times one can't tell whether their house is left standin' or not if they go away and leave it; so the old man and me had 'bout as well ride over and look after Skin Quarter; the niggers always do better when 'Ole Mars' is at home."

"I certainly hate to see you go, Aunt Mandy; and the children and Charley will raise a storm, I fear," said Hannah.

The storm was raised. Master Cornelius and plump little Sarah joined in a chorus of wails, and Charley Sheering expressed his deep regrets, when Aunt Mandy climbed up on the horse blocks and onto the pillion behind Daddy Scurlock, and the old mare trotted off down the road out of sight.

"I shall miss the dear old lady," said Charley Sheer-

ing. "She has spirit enough for two men, and is the bravest woman I ever saw."

"She's brave unt'well she's foolhardy sometimes," said Corneal Tyson. "T'other day she had liked to have flung all the fat in the fire when she sassed Colonel Fanning about you, Charley. I thought the old woman would set him afire."

"Good! How I should have enjoyed hearing that, Uncle Neal," said Charley.

"Fanning tuck it better than I thought he would, Charley; but you bet he made Dad Scurlock pay for all that sass."

"Aunt Mandy got the satisfaction, all the same, and Fanning and all such as he are afraid of such a woman as she is, Uncle Neal."

"Mebbe so, Charley. Master Cornelius, what do you think of Aunt Mandy?" questioned Tyson of his little namesake.

"Aunty Mandy is de bestest girl I know, Unker Neal. She makes hoss cakes and dumplin's for me and Sarah, and tells me how to shoot Tories."

This opinion was greeted with merry laughter by the whole party, as they stood on the porch where the Scurlocks had left them, Corneal Tyson winding up the conversation, as he shuffled off toward the pasture, by saying, "Dear Aunt Mandy! if she ever misses gettin' to Heaven 'twill be because of her hatred to the Tories."

"I'd like to have her chance of getting there, Uncle Neal," called out Charley Sheering with a merry laugh.

"See if you can't trade for it," shouted Tyson in reply. Corneal was always ready for a trade.

As Aunt Mandy walked up the path from her gate to the front porch at Skin Quarter she noticed that the

sweet williams and pinks were all free of weeds and there was a tidy look about the shady front yard.

"Some one has been here, old man," said Aunt Mandy, "and they've been clearin' up things a bit. I wonder who it can be."

"Shouldn't wonder if 'twas Luke, Mandy. He's been watchin' around while we were away as sure as ye are born, for he told me he was goin' to watch the Fanning gang as long as they was about Brush Creek."

"Mebbe 'tis he; we will soon see," and Aunt Mandy walked briskly up toward the vine-covered porch.

"Hello! who's that?" came from a drowsy voice in a shady corner of the porch, and Aunt Mandy saw a sleepy-looking man lying on the bench Daddy Scurlock used for taking his naps on in hot weather.

"Who do you s'pose it is, Luke Stallings? If Fanning's gang had caught ye nappin' that way, you would have fared badly."

"Bless my soul! if it isn't Aunt Mandy, and caught me asleep on her front porch. But I was awake right here all night, and I've got a buckshot hole or two through my left arm where a scamp fired into me last night just before I reached here, so I don't feel very well about now."

"Poor boy! Where did you come from, Luke, and who do you s'pose could have shot ye?"

"I've been about here several days. I know well enough who 'twas that shot me. Nobody else but Steve Walker. I was coming along the road afoot, having been over to Joel Sowell's, Sorrel Top being put safely away in your stable, and three men rode along past me. One of them halted, and I got behind a big oak tree. He called out, 'Who goes there?' I made no answer and he fired away, then galloped on to catch

up with the others. Several stray buckshot struck my arm, and it begins to give me a good deal of pain, Aunt Mandy."

Amen Scurlock came up just then, and, learning Luke's condition, soon dispatched old Juba's son, Scipio, for Dr. Tony Sidebottom, who resided about four miles back on the road toward Tyson's.

"Surely that Steve Walker ought to be hung," said Aunt Mandy as she helped Luke to get his bloody coat and waistcoat off, and bathed the bleeding wounds with a soft piece of linen rag. "There is no end to the people he will kill unless somebody kills him. Get into bed, my boy, and keep as easy as ye can until the doctor comes. I told Scip to hurry him up."

Meanwhile, Daddy Scurlock had rummaged in the bottom of the cupboard, brought out a little jar of honey and a stone jug containing about a gallon of old peach brandy. Getting a clean gourd, he poured out a stiff dram of the brandy, sweetened it with the honey, and brought it to Luke, saying, "I don't encourage drinkin', lad, but ye are losin' some blood and some strength along with it. Take a sip of peach and honey. 'Twill do ye good."

Luke took the draught, and, being in an exhausted condition, dozed off, while Daddy Scurlock and Aunt Mandy watched over him until Dr. Sidebottom arrived.

The tall form of Dr. Tony Sidebottom stooped a little as he entered the snug chamber in which Luke lay, and his first expression was characteristic.

"What devilment now, Aunt Mandy? Who's been shootin' Luke Stallings?"

"Who else but one of that gang, doctor? 'Twan't anybody but Steve Walker, and I would go to his hangin' as cheerful as I would go to a good breakfast."

"How was it, boy? Tell me all about it," questioned Dr. Tony tenderly.

Luke told his story and gave an account of his visit to the home of Sowell, whom he found spending every night in a swamp on his place, fearing the gang would take him prisoner and spirit him away to Wilmington.

"Which way were they goin' when you met 'em, Luke?"

"They were goin' toward Sowell's, and I had just left there. It was somewhere between bedtime and midnight. I have been lying on the porch since I got here until Aunt Mandy came."

Dr. Tony put on his spectacles, took a probe, and was soon "fishin'," as he said, for the buckshot. In one place two or three had entered so close together as to make quite a large wound, and from one cavity he picked a slug that was slightly imbedded in the large bone of the arm. As he worked he continued his comments.

"Yes, that gang was huntin' poor Sowell last night; and they'll ketch him, send him off a prisoner, and then bedevil his wife. Hell's too good for such folks, Aunt Mandy; and they shan't touch a hair of Roxy Sowell's head. I am going over there first thing in the mornin' and see what they have been up to."

"I am glad ye are, doctor, and, if they've carried Joel off, just fetch Roxy over here. She shall not lack a protector, shall she, old man?"

"No, indeed, Mandy; I can't abide this harryin', persecutin' way of Fanning's; and he is doin' more to recruit Greene's army than all Greene's recruitin' sargeants," said Daddy Scurlock, with a stern look on his usually placid face. Then the old man exclaimed

sadly, "Oh, for peace, peace! This burnin', killin' is just dreadful. I can't abide it."

"Here's another slug," said Dr. Tony, as he brought out an ugly, jagged piece of lead and proceeded to cleanse and staunch the wound. "Dag-gone Steve Walker! I would like to fill him full of lead and drap him into Brush Creek. There are not less than seven buckshot and slug holes in Luke's arm betwix' elbow and shoulder, and he meant to kill ye, lad."

"I do not doubt it, doctor, and I have about made up my mind deliberately to take first shot next time and send Steve on a long journey. I hate to kill any man, but shall not give Steve another chance at me."

"I see where you will be doin' exactly the right thing, Luke. We have got to kill out that gang, Amen Scurlock, and 'tain't worth while for you nor any of the King's friends to be temporizin' with 'em. You are a devilish sight too good natured, Amen, for the good of your neighbors."

"It may be so, Tony, but you know I have held aloof in the fight for two reasons, and they both still hold good. I am anxious to keep the little I have saved for Polly Rutherford; and I think I can do my poor neighbors more good by helpin' 'em when the Tories burn 'em out, so I try to have somethin' to help with. Suppose I was as poor as they?"

"I'll say this for ye, Amen—you never yet refused help to a poor neighbor, to my knowin'; and if all Tories was like you our Province would soon be free. I may have to test that heart of your'n to-morrow; and now, as we are gettin' Luke into some sort of shape, you can give him another dram of peach and honey and let him go to sleep."

"Won't you take a little dram yourself, Tony?"

"You know it's ag'in' my principles to drink reg'lar, Amen; a doctor has no business to drink reg'lar; but this old peach and honey wouldn't hurt a baby in moderation, so I'll just fix me a gourd of it, for peach and honey is an exception to my general rules."

"That is exactly what old Parson Rowe says, and he makes the exception pretty large," said Aunt Mandy. "Sometimes, just to tease the old man," she continued, "I let him sit a good while when he calls, without even a look at the cupboard or a hint at refreshment; and the parson will begin before long to talk of the Israelites and their journey to the promised land, and when he starts to tell of the land flowin' with milk and honey he invariably says, 'peach and honey,' whereupon I get right up, bring out the little jug and honey jar, and the old man exclaims, 'Why, Sister Mandy! did I say "peach and honey"? It's ag'in' my rule to drink reg'lar.' But I b'lieve Luke's asleep. Come out on the porch, Dr. Tony, and finish your dram."

"'Tis cool and comfortable out here, Aunt Mandy; and I am sure the Gods whom the ancients worshipped never had any nectar that tasted like this peach and honey, or old Jove would have been jolly drunk every night of his life."

"Well, just take care you don't do that same to-night, Dr. Tony. I always tell the old man that peach and honey is the most beguilesome drink I ever tasted."

"So it is, Aunt Mandy, so it is. Just this little gourdful will make Tony Sidebottom as rich as Corneal Tyson as long as it lasts."

"Then I should think you would want to keep it up, Dr. Tony."

"No, I only need an occasional sensation. You see

the most of my drinkin', and nobody in all this settlement has any peach and honey like your'n, Aunt Mandy."

"When you feel rich do you ever think about gettin' married, Dr. Tony?"

"Dag-gone it! that's the only time I ever do think about such a thing; and the idee skeers me most to death, Aunt Mandy, for I am naturally 'fraid of women."

Aunt Mandy chuckled merrily, and Amen Scurlock shook so with laughter that he came near rolling off the bench whereon he was reclining.

" 'Fraid of women! Why, Dr. Tony, they are neither bears nor pant'ers. I know a splendid girl that would suit you prime; she's good-lookin', spry, and, I think, would marry."

"The devil you say! Excuse me, Aunt Mandy. You see, I am not altogether civilized."

"And you never will be, Dr. Tony, until some clever woman gets ye. You need a mighty change."

"I fear I shall stay semi-civilized, then; but who is the gal? Just name her."

"She is tall, has blue eyes, red cheeks, red hair, good teeth, a sweet mouth, and her name is Cynthy Shaw. Now, Cynthy is a prime girl every way, Dr. Tony; and as to housekeepin', I will put her against Hannah Sheering or anybody you can name, for old Tim Shaw's house is as sweet and clean as a christened baby. She has sense, judgment, and taste, and any settled man in Chatham County would do the best job of his life to get her for a wife. What do you think about it, old man?"

"Cynthy's all right, Mandy; and Tony and her would

pull in double harness to beat the best. Better try your luck thar, Tony."

"These is no times to take on extra responsibilities, friends, although the idee in itself is not ag'in' my feelings. Miss Cynthy is as sweet as a honey shuck, if her hair is red; and old Tim Shaw wouldn't be a bad daddy-in-law."

"Not a bit of it," replied Aunt Mandy. "You see, Dr. Tony, you are a rank Whig like I am; and old Tim is just Tory enough and Whig enough to make both sides let him alone, while he makes money out of whoever goes dead."

"He's got a snug bit of money hid away, too, Tony," said Amen, "and Cynthy will get the whole pot all in her own rights."

"Dag-gone it! don't tell me any more nor give me any more peach and honey, or I'll court the girl afore day. Come, now, tell me something about Polly Rutherford. When did you hear from her?"

CHAPTER IX

NEWS FROM POLLY RUTHERFORD

Being asked for news of their beloved daughter, the Scurlocks quickly informed Dr. Tony Sidebottom, through Aunt Mandy, that they had not received a word of news from the dear gal since the letter Amen had brought.

"Is that so? Well, that reminds me. I was up at the crossroads to-day."

"You was!" chuckled Aunt Mandy.

"Yes, I was, but I didn't see the gal, nor try to see her."

"Nobody said you did," said Amen with a hearty laugh in his voice.

"Well, dag-gone it! you won't let me tell what I started to say. As I was a-sayin', I was at the crossroads, and Timothy Shaw handed me a letter for you, Aunt Mandy, that was left thar on yesterday by a young Continental soldier. He said his name was John Paisly, that he was recruitin' soldiers for General Greene, and would try and call at Skin Quarter afore he left these parts. He had six strappin' young fellows with him, and said he would like to come up with Fanning and give him a whack."

"You forgetful creature! Where is the letter, Dr. Tony?"

"Inside my bootleg, Aunt Mandy. Excuse me for

not givin' it to you afore, but I was worried about Luke. Here 'tis," and reaching down into a pocket inside his boot, Dr. Sidebottom drew out a packet wrapped in stout paper and addressed to "Mrs. Amanda Scurlock, Skin Quarter Plantation, South of Shaw's Crossroads, Chatham County, N. C."

"It is in my blessed child's own writing," exclaimed Aunt Mandy as she gazed at it in the moonlight, "and I will just light a tallow dip and see what the dear gal has to say."

"Hurry up, Mandy. Waitin' is poor business," said Daddy Scurlock, who was anxious to hear the news.

Aunt Mandy found the tinder box on the mantel shelf, and soon struck a light, while her eager eyes were not long in reading out to her interested hearers the following letter:

"Near Old Buffalo, August 5, 1781.

"My Dearest Mammy:

"I have had part of this letter written for more than two weeks, waiting for some chance to send it to you, and had about given up all hope of such a chance when the hand of Providence brought me the opportunity I was looking for. I went with Parson Caldwell and Aunt Rachael to Buffalo Meeting House last Sunday, as the Parson had an appointment to preach there. The crowd gathered was the largest I ever saw in my life at any place of worship, and some of the people rode more than fifteen miles, and said they would ride forty miles any day for the privilege of hearing such a sermon, for there was but one Dr. Caldwell in the whole Province. I shall never forget the text, Mammy. It was from John's Gospel, Chapter 3rd, 16th Verse: 'For God so loved the world that He gave His only be-

gotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' Oh, what tremendous power he gave that little word 'so'; and I never understood before as I did after that sermon how great was the love of the Father toward a sinful world, nor what a gift He bestowed upon us when he sacrificed His only Son to save us. How beautiful was his invitation to sinners, as he stood there before a spellbound audience, his tender, heart-searching tones pleading, 'Whosoever believeth may come.' Many came, and there were happy hearts and tearful, joyful eyes, and tuneful voices, as the old meeting house gave echo to a hymn that I shall never forget, beginning:

"Oh, for a thousand tongues to sing
My dear Redeemer's praise;
The glories of my God and King,
The triumphs of His grace."

"When the benediction was said, and we went out into the grove to eat our dinner, I thought the people would never let the beloved parson eat a bite. They flocked around to shake hands, to thank him for the precious sermon, and to invite him to dine. He was so sweet and gentle to everybody, but said he must dine with his family, as Aunt Rachael had brought a large hamper containing a bountiful supply; and he invited so many to partake, and so many accepted, that the fragments that remained were none too abundant for the servants. Tell daddy that one of the guests who dined with us that day was dear old Mrs. Paisly, with whom we spent that last night on the road. She remembered me, gave me a sweet kiss, and then introduced me to her son, Colonel John Paisly, who had unexpectedly returned from Greene's army to gather up recruits.

"The Colonel is a very handsome man, with dark brown eyes and hair, and a ruddy, clean-shaven face; is very soldierly in his bearing, and has almost as gentle manners as Parson Caldwell. He seemed quite pleased to meet me, Mammy, and—well, if I had never seen a certain other dark-eyed gentleman who lives in Chatham, and if Colonel Paisly were very persistent in his attentions, I am not just now prepared to say what would be the end of it. What a lot of 'ifs'! Colonel Paisly told me as soon as he learned that I was from Chatham, that he would soon be going in that direction, and offered to render me any service he could. It is he that is the bearer of this letter; and if he calls at Skin Quarter put him in my room and give him the best reception you can. I know daddy will gladly entertain him for the sake of dear old lady Ruth Paisly. He is highly educated and refined, and I know you will think him a fine gentleman, Mammy.

"Parson Caldwell's place has been overrun and greatly abused by the British and Tories this past spring; and, just think of it, Mammy, the enemy destroyed his fine collection of books, the dear books he had gathered with so much care and loved so well. Still, he is patient, and lives so beautiful a Christian life it is a pleasure to be under his roof.

"Do send me a long letter by Colonel Paisly, and give my love to all who love me.

"Your dutiful daughter,

"POLLY RUTHERFORD."

"What a scholar Polly Rutherford is, to be sure," exclaimed Dr. Tony. "You and Amen ought to be powerful proud of that gal."

"And so we are, Tony," replied Amen. "She is a gal that may take her time, and pick and choose from high quality folk, and that is just what I have been tellin' Mandy."

"I s'pose you have heard talk about Luke and Polly Rutherford, hain't ye, Dr. Tony?" said Aunt Mandy; "doctors hear most everything that's a-goin'."

"I have heard that Luke was just a-lickin' the dust in Polly Rutherford's tracks; but I didn't know as to his chances, and was afeard he was barkin' up the wrong tree."

"No! No! I think he has treed his game, Tony," said Amen. "Of course women are liable to change up their minds; but, when Polly Rutherford left home I think she had about made up her mind to marry Luke."

"You don't say, Amen. Well, you haven't axed me about him, but I will venture to say that Luke Stallings, for his chances, is the most dependable young man I know; and, if the war was over and he could settle down to business, would take the best of care of Polly and make her a fine husband."

"I believe that, too, Tony, and I hain't anything in the world ag'in' Luke; but Polly Rutherford has had better chances than he, and she could strike high in pickin' a husband."

"That's so, Amen."

"Yes, and while that's so, strikin' high don't always get the best husband," said Aunt Mandy. "What a woman wants—that is a true woman—is a man she can always depend upon. I have never seen this Colonel Paisly, but I hope Polly Rutherford won't get tangled up in a love affair with him and lose as good a man as Luke Stallings, unless he should prove to be all he ought

to be. If he knows—and she ought to tell him—that she is promised to Luke, if he is a high-toned gentleman he will take himself off."

"Well, when the pot biles over it will soon settle itself; and, as I wish to start over to Joel Sowell's by light tomorrow morning, if you will give me a shake down, Aunt Mandy, I will go to sleep."

"Excuse me for keepin' you up so late, Dr. Tony," said Aunt Mandy; "just go into Luke's room, and there is a couch all ready for you."

Soon Dr. Tony Sidebottom was in the land of dreams, and he dreamed of courting Cynthy Shaw, and as she said "Yes," he kissed her so emphatically upon her red lips that the smacking sound he made came very near waking him.

Before dawn Aunt Mandy was astir, and soon had a hot breakfast ready for the doctor; and she was delighted to find that Luke had slept well and was, according to the doctor, doing as well as a wounded gamecock could. The ride to Joel Sowell's was a little less than three miles; and Amen Scurlock had determined that he would make the visit with the doctor, and held himself in readiness to do what he could for his neighbor, should he need friendly aid. As they drew near the Sowell place, just about sunrise, they were distressed to see several oat stacks and the barn and corncrib on fire, the flames reaching out toward the picket fence that surrounded the dwelling, and threatening to destroy that, as well.

"My God! look at that, Amen! Them devils are burning poor Joel out of house and home"; and, putting spurs to old Blaze, Dr. Sidebottom, followed by Amen, soon reached the scene of destruction.

Steve Walker and three other members of Fanning's

troop were busy touching a pine torch here and there to help on the conflagration; while poor Roxy Sowell, with a tender little babe of four months on her lap, was sitting on the steps leading into her cottage, weeping as if her heart would break; while her husband, his hands pinioned behind him, was tied fast to a tree in sight of her. The clatter of hoofs and the sudden arrival of Dr. Sidebottom and Amen Scurlock caused the vandals to pause, and Sidebottom was not long in speaking his mind.

"Steve Walker, what's all this devilment you are kicking up, for? And what are you going to do with Joel?"

"We are makin' rebellion odious, Dr. Tony; do you want a taste? And we propose to take Joel Sowell to Wilmington."

"I just want to tell ye, Steve Walker, that this kind er business has got to be stopped; you are gettin' odious very fast; and, as to takin' Joel away from the support of his little family, you'll not do it."

"And pray, who will keep us from it, sir? We get our orders from Colonel Fanning."

Looking down the road, Dr. Sidebottom saw coming at a lively gallop seven horsemen, and he knew that help was not far off.

"You don't deserve anything but death, you nor none of your gang; but I will give you a chance to git away," said Sidebottom. "Yonder comes a troop that will make buzzard feed out of you in ten minutes, if you stay here."

"Who are they, and did you bring 'em here, Dr. Tony? If you did, thar will be an account ag'in' you."

"I don't know them; I only know they are Continentals, and I had nothing to do with their being here;

but I thank God they have come. Remember, Steve Walker, that Tony Sidebottom is able to settle any account you or Fanning have ag'in' him. Jest stay here a few minutes longer and you will find out more than you want to know."

Walker watched for a moment, with keen interest, the rapid approach of the strangers; then called to his men, "Take your prisoner, mount, and git as fast as you can."

Amen Scurlock here spoke very decidedly. "You mount and git, but you don't take Joel Sowell away from his family. If he has done anything ag'in' the laws of the Province, I will see that he answers. Be in a hurry! Go! for we will have to fight this fire you have started, or Sowell's property will all be destroyed."

Swearing vengeance upon Scurlock and Dr. Sidebottom, Steve Walker and his men made a hasty retreat just as Colonel Paisly and his men reached the scene.

"What is all this?" questioned the Colonel as he saw the burning barn and out-buildings, the weeping woman and babe, and Joel Sowell just being released from the tree.

"The devil's to pay," said Dr. Tony. "That was part of Fannin's gang that rode away just now, and they were burnin' up Joel Sowell's property, and were about to carry him away prisoner and leave his wife and babe to starve. Amen Scurlock and I got wind of it and rode over to put a stop to it. Lend a hand here with your men, Colonel What-you-call-'em, and let us put out this fire."

"My name is Paisly," replied the Colonel; "I should have liked getting here a little sooner, but—get to work,

boys; knock off a few pickets where the fence is catching, and try to stop the burning of that stable if you can. I should like, too, to cross swords with this Fanning," he added, turning to the doctor. "But we will talk more about it when we put out the fire."

"That's business," said Sidebottom, as he and Scurlock went to work flinging water on the burning barn and stable, while the Colonel and his men worked until the smoke and soot streaked their faces as the perspiration dripped from them.

Much earnest work saved the stable, but the barn and forage proved a total loss. The house was rescued none too soon, for had their friends reached them a few moments later the work of destruction would have been complete, and Joel Sowell would have been a prisoner, his wife and child homeless.

"Now that the scrimmage is over," said Doctor Tony, "we can take time to find out one another. My name, Colonel Paisly, is Sidebottom, Tony Sidebottom; and this is Amen Scurlock; and our would-be prisoner is Joel Sowell; and this lady is Mrs. Sowell."

The Colonel's men had all gone to look after their horses, and he was left with the group we have mentioned.

"I am glad, indeed, to meet all of you," said the Colonel with great courtesy. "It seems to me that I brought a letter for a Mrs. Scurlock living somewhere hereabout. Perhaps, sir, you are related to the young lady staying at Dr. Caldwell's over in Guilford?"

"She is my daughter," replied Amen. "We got the letter on yesterday, and I thank you for your kindness in bringing it. My wife wishes, also, to thank you, so you must go home with me."

"We have been in so much trouble, gentlemen, that

we have both forgotten our manners," said sweet Roxy Sowell.

"Indeed we have," said her husband. "Do come in and let us get you some fresh water so that you can get the soot and smoke off; we can never forget your kindness."

The noggins on the porch shelf were soon filled with cool, fresh water; and each one of the visitors found a free application of water, and a good rubbing with a flax towel, very cleansing and refreshing.

"Don't talk to me about kindness, Joel," said Dr. Tony as he sponged off his face. "I wouldn't give a dag-gone for a man that would stand by and see a neighbor harried and persecuted, without doin' something to help him. Scurlock and I had made up our minds to lick Walker's whole crowd rather than see you taken away, but Colonel Paisly here saved us the job."

"And now," said Amen, "Mandy says you, Joel, Roxy and the baby must come over to our house and stay. I've got a hidin' place at Skin Quarter where Walker will never find you, and Roxy and baby can stay until the war is over."

"You are certainly like a father to us, Daddy Scurlock, and God in his goodness has answered a question I had been asking myself ever since the battle of Guilford Court House, and that was, 'What would become of Roxy and baby if I joined Greene's army?' "

Colonel Paisly listened to this familiar talk between the neighbors and seemed much interested, for he had a glimpse of a warm-hearted, noble old man who practiced the Golden Rule, and lived, even in those days of trial, according to Gospel light; and that old man was Polly Rutherford's father.

It was soon decided that Colonel Paisly should leave

his men quartered at Joel Sowell's place (Joel giving them lodging in his house), and return with Amen Scurlock to Skin Quarter for a visit. Joel, Roxy and baby were also to go; and Dr. Tony Sidebottom, who had a number of visits to make, promised to get there in time for supper and lodging, saying, as he paced away on Old Blaze, "I shan't go near the cross-roads to-day."

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CHAPTER X

COLONEL PAISLY MEETS LUKE STALLINGS

Aunt Mandy had been busy all the forenoon in tidying up her home that always seemed to her visiting friends spotless and speckless, occasionally pausing in her work to peep into Luke's room and to ask, "Are ye needin' anything, Luke?"

To one of these inquiries Luke answered, "I am as comfortable as I can be, Aunt Mandy, but I do need something."

"And what is it, my boy?"

"I need Polly Rutherford, Aunt Mandy, if ever a man needed a helpmeet."

"Ho! so Polly Rutherford's mammy isn't a good enough nurse for ye, you saucy fellow."

"Don't misjudge me, Aunt Mandy; you are a great deal better nurse than Polly Rutherford knows how to be, but while I am wounded and temporarily laid by, I feel as I never did before, that I cannot go on living without Polly Rutherford."

"Luke, you are a good boy, and I appreciate your love for our gal, and I know she is worth the tenderest love of the best man that ever stepped. But, did ye ever think that, after all, you might meet with disappointment; that possibly Polly Rutherford might see someone else that would draw out from her heart a deeper love than she now feels for you?"

"Oh, Aunt Mandy! have you heard anything that leads you to talk that way?"

"Well, not exactly, child, and still, a letter I had from Polly Rutherford on yesterday evening set me a-thinking along in that direction."

"Tell me all about it, Aunt Mandy; I love Polly Rutherford better than my own life, and will never stand in the way of her happiness. If she loves someone else better than she does Luke Stallings, who has loved her since she was a little child, I will go away, carry my misery with me, and leave her to be happy with her new love."

"You take it a little too serious, Luke. I will let you read Polly's letter, and then you can draw out her meaning just as well as I can;" and Aunt Mandy handed Luke the letter.

It was no trouble to read Polly's letter, for it was as plain as print, as Aunt Mandy said, and Luke read every word with deepest interest; then, folding it up, he lay silently thinking so long that Aunt Mandy aroused him by a question.

"Well, what do you think of it, Luke?"

"It is not altogether as bad as I expected, Aunt Mandy. Polly Rutherford is gay, likes the flatteries of young men, and is so young, so winsome, and has seen so little of the world in which she lives, we must expect her to enjoy everything, even the serious attentions of attractive men. I am going to give her a chance, Aunt Mandy, and if she wants Colonel John Paisly, she certainly don't want poor Luke Stallings, and there's an end of it. When do you expect this Colonel Paisly?"

"He is liable to come at any hour; he was at Shaw's Cross-Roads yesterday. But you rest easy, Luke; you

haven't lost your girl yet, and up to now and from now on, I am your friend. So rest easy and take a nap."

"Bless your dear old heart! I love you, Aunt Mandy, like a mother, for you know, as an orphan, I never knew a mother's love; and in all the future I am going to try and be worthy of your confidence and affection, and will never stand in the way of your daughter's true happiness."

Just then Aunt Mandy heard her old man calling Scipio to take the horses, and excusing herself, she was on the porch ready to receive her visitors by the time they could walk from the horse-blocks up to the shady entrance.

"I certainly am glad to see ye, Roxy; and you, too, Joel; and the baby, bless its dear little heart," exclaimed Aunt Mandy, as she kissed Roxy and baby. "It is a beauty; just the image of you, Roxy; there's where it gets its beauty, Joel."

"Mandy," said Daddy Scurlock, "stop kissin' that baby long enough to shake hands with Colonel Paisly. Colonel, this is my wife."

"Oh, excuse me, Colonel Paisly; I am proud to see you and to welcome you to Skin Quarter. Come in, all, and have seats here or in the sitting-room, as suits you best. Roxy, you carry baby into my room, where the little darling can be quiet. Old man, you know where to put Colonel Paisly."

Colonel Paisly's face was lighted by a bright smile, and as he cordially grasped Aunt Mandy's hand, said, "I thank you, madam, for your hearty welcome, and already feel at home."

She felt that she was meeting a superior man, who might prove a serious rival to Luke.

Scipio having stabled the horses, soon supplied the vessels on the porch shelf with pure, cool water; and each of the recently arrived enjoyed and felt all the better for another ablution. Meanwhile, Aunt Mandy had sought her own chamber, where she found Roxy hushing her babe to sleep, having made a cradle out of Daddy Scurlock's big arm-chair and two huge feather pillows.

"Well!" exclaimed Aunt Mandy, "it's amazin' funny, our havin' a baby in this house, Roxy. I must rummage the garret and fetch out Polly Rutherford's cradle. Here, Scipio, go into the garret and fetch the cradle. Now, sit down, child—baby is asleep—and tell me all about your troubles, for I know you've had 'em."

"Aunt Mandy, I never spent such a night as last night, and hope never to see such another. Steve Walker and three other vandals reached our home a little after midnight; Joel was just leaving the house as they got there, and they caught and tied him, after striking him over the head with the butt of a gun. Then they set fire to our barn, stable, corn-crib, and every stack of forage we had, and were just getting ready to fire the dwelling when Daddy Scurlock and Dr. Tony Sidebottom rode up. There were sharp words between them, and I was expecting hard blows, when, to our great relief, Colonel Paisly and six well-armed soldiers were seen coming. Steve Walker was about to carry Joel off as a prisoner, when Daddy Scurlock spoke up and told them they should not take Joel away from me; and the cowards, cursing and swearing vengeance, mounted their horses and fled. Dr. Tony, Daddy Scurlock, the Colonel and the soldiers, all went to work and soon subdued the fire; but our barn and all our forage

was burned to ashes, and I feel sure the villains will yet destroy our home."

"Roxy Sowell, I sometimes wish I was a man, and when I hear of such outrages as this, I wonder that every biped that is a man don't get his gun and go to fighting. My old man is not strong enough to stand soldiering, for he has the rheumatiz; but he is fast gettin' cured of his sympathy with King George, I can tell ye; and old Corneal Tyson is pretty well converted, too, since Fanning shot Charley Sheering. By the way, Roxy, how do you like this Colonel Paisly?"

"He is a very proper gentleman, Aunt Mandy, and his manners are beautiful. I like the way he treats all women—so courtly, so refined in his speech, I love to hear him talk. Joel is going to join his troop, I think, and follow this war to the end; and he is likely to get Luke Stallings and Charley Sheering—perhaps a few more from Brush Creek."

"The more the merrier, Roxy. I would like to give a parting dinner to the whole troop, with not less than twenty soldiers from Brush Creek in it. Now make yourself at home, honey; I must go and look after poor Luke Stallings."

"What's the matter with Luke, Aunt Mandy?"

"Why, didn't the old man tell ye that the same gang that burned your barn shot Luke last night?"

"No, indeed; hadn't heard a word of it; Luke only left our house about eleven o'clock."

"He was on his way back to Skin Quarter when he passed the gang; they fired into him and he has seven wounds in his left arm between elbow and shoulder. Dr. Tony Sidebottom says none of them are serious and he will soon be all right"; and with this parting

remark Aunt Mandy passed out and entered Luke's room.

"So your visitors have come, Aunt Mandy; I must make haste and get out of this, for I don't want to be in the way when your house is so full."

"Now, Luke, ain't you ashamed of yourself to talk that way? I am not crowded one bit, there's plenty of room, and you know you are always welcome here. What would Polly Rutherford say if she had heard you?"

"I don't know; perhaps my absence would be very agreeable with Colonel Paisly here; girls like a change, Aunt Mandy."

"Well, Luke, if you don't stand up for your own rights I can't help ye. I would hold my head just as high as Colonel Paisly, and think my presence just as welcome as his. Girls like a man that holds himself just as high as the best, and makes 'em look up to him; at least, that's Polly Rutherford's way. Cheer up, boy; I want you to meet this Colonel Paisly and let him see that you are a true gentleman and a born soldier, if you have only had plantation chances."

"How long will the Colonel be here, Aunt Mandy?"

"Only a few days, Luke; he is gathering up recruits for Greene's army, and does not stay long in one place. Oh! I must tell ye about what Steve Walker and his gang did after they shot ye last night. They went over to Joel Sowell's, caught him and tied him, then set fire to his stable, barn, and forage stacks. They were just about to fire the dwelling when my old man and Dr. Tony got there. While Dr. Tony was having words with Steve Walker, who should come in sight but Colonel Paisly and six troopers, and the way those cowardly rascals scampered to their horses and got away makes

my old man laugh every time he tells about it. All hands went to work and put out the fire, and my old man brought the Colonel, Joel, Roxy and baby home with him, and here they are. Joel lost all his forage and his barn."

"What became of Dr. Tony, Aunt Mandy?"

"He is on his rounds; had to see a lot of chronic cases that doctors keep for dull times; but he will be here to supper and to spend the night."

"I am going to tell Dr. Tony, Aunt Mandy, that he must heal up these wounds of mine and get me in fighting shape. There is too much deviltry being done by our enemies for me to be laid up now. I think I shall get a transfer from Roper, and join Colonel Paisley's troop; I have a good mount, and I must go regularly into the field."

"You are right, Luke; and while I hate to see you go away, for I feel that you are a great protection to us here, I want you to defend your country, and to show both friends and enemies what kind of grit you are made of. Stay quiet now, boy, and get another little nap; after dinner I will bring Colonel Paisly in to see you."

Aunt Mandy knew how to entertain hospitably; and her old cook, Anachy, had a reputation all through Brush Creek neighborhood as the best cake maker and the most skillful roaster of meats in all the countryside. Her skill was not lacking on this occasion, and Colonel Paisley was amazed at the spread that awaited him, when dinner was announced. The chicken pie was just peppery enough; the old ham was crusted over with crumbs and sugar, and browned on the surface, with its juicy flavor afforded a wonderful stimulus to appetite. A pair of ducks, plump and yellow, were

garnished with a savory dressing, odorous of herbs; the sweet potatoes were baked in a huge earthenware dish; while a companion dish contained a pudding made of tender young corn. Sundry pickles and preserves were at hand, and rich golden honey, while wooden platters were filled with delicious corn-pone and wheaten hoe-cakes. To the soldier such a feast had been, until his recent visit home, a memory only; and Colonel Paisly enjoyed not only the dainties that ministered to a ready appetite, but the cheerful conversation that seemed to be a natural sequence.

"You were speaking to me just now, Mrs. Scurlock," said Paisly, as he helped himself to another hoe-cake, "about the young man those dastards shot last night; I really hope it is nothing serious, and I would like very much to see him."

"The wounds are painful, Colonel, but Dr. Tony thinks that Luke will soon recover. He is young, strong, has no bad habits, and he has plenty of pluck, too; so everything is in his favor. The country could ill afford to lose such a young man as Luke Stallings, Colonel. When dinner is over I will introduce you to him."

"Thanks, madam; I believe all you say. That he stands so high in the good opinion of Mr. Scurlock and of you, madam, is a guarantee that he is a true knight that will yet achieve success as soldier and citizen."

"He had been on an errand of pure friendship when he was shot, Colonel," said Mrs. Sowell. "Aunt Mandy and Uncle Scurlock had been away from home a week or more, and Luke came over here on a scout to find out what Fanning's gang were doing and to look after their place. He would spend his days over here at Skin Quarter, then go around at night and gather all the

information he could. Almost every night he would come to our house and stay awhile, tell us the news, and then disappear. It was on his way from our house to Skin Quarter that he met Steve Walker and the gang that tried to burn us out, and Walker fired at him and disabled his left arm. When Luke gets well he will make some Tory pay heavily for all he is suffering now."

"But for the urgent need that General Greene has for full ranks and an efficient army now," said Colonel Paisly, "I would obtain a detail for the special duty, come back home, raise a regiment, and break up Fanning's roost. He is doing great damage to our cause, and we are only fighting him in detail, instead of giving one crushing blow."

"Luke says," replied Aunt Mandy, "that Fanning has been so bold and successful that he suspects he is going to undertake something desperate bad before long; and the fear of that is what has kept him from joinin' the reg'lar army. He is watchin' them, and a lot of Whigs are doing the same."

"I have heard a good deal of this Fanning; he must be a desperate character, indeed. How many men does he command, Mr. Scurlock?"

"His command varies in size, Colonel, anywhere from twenty to forty men; and they do their bloody work in bands of from five to twenty-five men; he often has two companies out in different directions at the same time. They are lawless, sir, and I have no sympathy with lawless deeds. I have been a Royalist, Colonel, but Fanning has about cured me."

"Thank the Lord!" exclaimed Aunt Mandy. "The old man is converted at last, but I am afraid if it gets norated through Chatham and Randolph, those wretches

will come and burn our home over our heads. Just go on like you have been, old man; you have been all along as good a Whig as I want to see."

"I shall have to be very careful, Colonel, or I shall not have a home over my head in a week's time; but, in a quiet way, Men-Repent Scurlock can and will help you; I will help you, and Fanning will be none the wiser, smart as he is."

Thus passed the dinner hour; and Daddy Scurlock and Joel Sowell were sitting with the Colonel on the porch, smoking their cob pipes, when Aunt Mandy came out, saying, "If you will all put aside those pipes, you may come in and see Luke; he is awake now."

The pipes were laid away on a shelf for future reference, and the ex-smokers followed Aunt Mandy into Luke's room.

"Hello, Luke, old boy; sorry to see you laid up," was Joel's salutation. "The rascals had liked to have clubbed my brains out with a musket last night, too; my head feels sore enough, I can tell ye."

Joel then stepped aside and Scurlock said, "Luke, this is Colonel Paisly come to see ye."

Luke extended over the white counterpane his right hand, which was tenderly grasped in both hands by Colonel Paisly, and his cheerful voice uttered a warm acknowledgment of the introduction.

"I am glad to know you, Mr. Stallings; but sorry, indeed, to find you sore wounded, and truly hope you will soon be well again. 'Tis hard for youth and ambition to lie in bed."

" 'Tis the fate of war, Colonel," said Luke with a faint smile. "I should have minded it little more than a mosquito bite but for the loss of blood. I must have been bleeding for at least twelve hours when Aunt

Mandy found me on her porch. But for her and Dr. Tony I should soon have had a case of inflammation, possibly blood-poison."

"You are in splendid hands, Mr. Stallings, and I expect a marvelous recovery. I would ask no better quarters should the fate of war bring me such wounds," said the Colonel with a bright smile.

"I have been wounded at a bad time, Colonel; I am sure that Fanning has some desperate stroke in contemplation, and I should have found out all about it to-day or to-morrow. Now I am unable to move around, and the scoundrel has one Whig less to watch him. Charley Sheering, too, is nearly as bad off as I am; he would be at their heels if he were able to ride."

"It is too bad, Mr. Stallings; suppose you and I hold a council of war, and, with the information you have, I and my men may be able to do something."

"We shall have to take Joel Sowell into our council, Colonel, for he knows every hog-path in these parts, and I cannot possibly go with you."

"You can count on me," said Joel.

"Come, old man," said Aunt Mandy, "we are not wanted in here just now. I will hear it all soon enough, and—well, you had better not know too much." So the old couple made their exit and joined Roxy and baby on the porch.

"You can now state your surmises, Mr. Stallings," said Colonel Paisly.

"I will do so in few words, Colonel. Fanning has for two days been gathering his men; and each man is required to be well-mounted, well-armed, and to bring three days' rations. I learned this from a source that has never failed to be accurate; Tim Shaw told me. Fanning is evidently expecting quite a large force of

An Interview Between Two Lovers

Tories from the Scotch settlements, for Shaw also hinted that. By this time I expect they are all on the road, and my surmise is, that they have gone in the direction of Hillsboro."

"Would Fanning dare try to capture the Governor, Mr. Stallings?"

"Fanning would attempt to capture the devil if he thought he had anything like a fighting chance, Colonel; you don't know the man."

"Suppose," said Joel, "we get your men and do a little scouting to-night, Colonel. I can take you around by Jack Rains' cabin and then up to the cross-roads, then around into the road leading towards the Orange line."

"Good! if you feel strong enough after your rough handling last night, Sowell, I shall be glad to have you. We will get supper, mount, and ride over to your place first."

Sowell then withdrew to acquaint his wife with his intention to go with Colonel Paisly on the adventurous night ride, leaving the Colonel alone with Luke.

"Aunt Mandy tells me that you have made the acquaintance of her daughter, Miss Polly Rutherford, Colonel," said Luke, glancing shyly up to see the effect of his words.

"Yes, Mr. Stallings, I consider it a great privilege to say that I have met Miss Polly Rutherford several times, and hope to meet her again on my return to Guilford."

"We are quite proud of the young lady, Colonel; she is really the belle of Chatham, and is much more than beautiful."

"All you say, Mr. Stallings, is true, and you might

pass higher encomiums, finding me ready to echo every word. How long have you known the young lady?"

"Since she was a little golden-haired lass of four years, Colonel. As a child she was a womanly little one; and as a young lady she is as guileless as a child."

"Well said, Mr. Stallings; I see that Miss Polly Rutherford occupies no second place in, at least, your esteem."

"You might say my heart, Colonel, for I am not ashamed to confess anywhere that I love her with a devotion that can only cease with my life, yea, on into eternity it must go; and I have so loved her from her childhood."

"Such devotion, Mr. Stallings, deserves reciprocation. It is not my business yet to lift the sacred veil over her heart—did I only know how far she is committed to you or to any one else, it would make a great change in my purposes, friend, for she is the only woman I ever saw that I desired from the first day I knew her, to win."

"So we are rivals, Colonel! and are strangely communicative to each other, I must say, on so short an acquaintance. Having spoken so plainly, I will go further and say that Miss Polly Rutherford Scurlock was, when she left home, my promised bride. I escorted her to Guilford and had intended to accompany her father when he should go to fetch her home. Since you have intimated so candidly your attachment to the young lady, my purposes are changed. I shall get a transfer to your troop and go with you to the front. We will stand together in the thick of battle. Should both of us be spared to return to our homes, I shall take no advantage of Polly Rutherford's promise; she shall be left free to choose between us."

Luke's voice trembled as he uttered this resolve, and his right hand twitched with the nervous strain that was sorely trying him. In a moment he felt his hand clasped between the strong, warm palms of Colonel Paisly; and tears came into his dark eyes as he heard the following words:

"My dear Mr. Stallings, we were strangers but can never be so again. I honor your manly words, but you shall never make such a sacrifice for me. Let what I have told you as to what I might do, be as if unspoken. I have not yet breathed one word of love to your affianced, and would not now that I know all. I shall be delighted to have you in my troop, and will do all I can for your promotion. God bless you and grant you all the happiness you crave."

In another moment the Colonel had joined the company on the porch. A little later Aunt Mandy, entering Luke's room, found this brave young man in tears.

"Hi! what is the matter, my boy?" was her eager question.

"I am overcome by the self-renunciation of the noblest-hearted man I ever met, Aunt Mandy. Colonel Paisly is a Christian gentleman, and, in many respects I feel that he could make Polly Rutherford happier than I could; but he cannot love her more devotedly."

"Did you both talk about her, boy?"

"Yes; the Colonel understands exactly the relation between us, and he is crushing his love for her out of his heart for my sake."

"You don't say, Luke! Well, he is a true nobleman, one of the knights you read about. God bless him!"

CHAPTER XI

THE CAPTURE OF GOVERNOR BURKE

Leaving Luke Stallings in the motherly hands of Aunt Mandy, and Charley Sheering to a rapid recovery under the tender nursing of Hannah, we will spend a little time in the Tory camp at Dry Fork; follow Colonel Hector McNeill and his Scotch Loyalists into Chatham and to their union with Colonel Fanning's troop on Deep River, and from thence to the capture of Governor Burke.

In the ranks of Colonel McNeill's six hundred or more, there was found some of the best blood in the Scotch settlements, and they were quite as much in earnest in their espousal of the cause of King George as were many of their neighbors in championing American Independence. The cause he espouses has ever been dear to the heart of a Scotchman, and the divided households found in the Scotch region remind the writer of a toast given by an old Scottish Laird at a public dinner. Being urged to give a toast to the Scotchman, he at first declined; and on being urged, replied, "Weel, if I mon, I mon; here's to a Scotchman; may he ever be richt, for, if he's wrang, he's wrang to a' eternity."

Right or wrong, a Scotchman has tenacity. King George had no stronger friends than the Loyal Scotch of the Cape Fear Country; and the cause of freedom had no more fearless adherents than their brothers who

nursed at the same breast and had been reared beside the same Ingle nook.

Colonel Hector McNeill had been an officer in the British service, and had sworn allegiance to King George. It was therefore his pride to keep an oath, and to defend what he considered Crown Rights. In camp he was considerate of his men, always ready to rebuke those officers who would make a soldier's life more onerous than necessity required, and therefore he was greatly beloved. Early September nights were a little cool, and around Colonel McNeill's camp fire might be seen grouped at night officers and subalterns, all ready listeners to the Colonel's reminiscences as a soldier of the King.

"We mon make this the last campaign, lads," said the old Colonel. "We mon play our broadswords like true Highlanders and crush this rebellion. Mony o' the men that be in camp this nicht stood foreainst the King at Culloden Moor. I shall never forget that bloody day; ye then took oaths, lads, when the clansmen could no longer fecht, to stand by King and Crown; and we mon do it."

"'Tis a bold stroke, Colonel," said young Duncan Ray, "if I hear aright our intentions."

"Aye; an' 'tis the bold strokes, laddie, that win. That Fanning, I ha' no liking for the mon, but he ha' the dash of a tartar when the battle rages."

"And Fanning is to join us, Colonel?"

"Aye, lad."

"Our men say that Fanning is only a cattle lifter, a horse thief, and plunderer, Colonel, and they would not let him lead them in fight."

"They ha' no need to, Duncan, for I am senior and all will bide my orders."

policy would make it a war to extermination, and a question as to which could survive longest."

"You have too big and soft a heart, Colonel McNeill, for a soldier, brave as ye are. We are in this expedition to win, and I believe you will do a soldier's duty. Good night; your orders are march just before daylight; we shall lead the column"; and Fanning, mounting Red Buck, and followed by his men, rode away.

The following evening found the whole Tory force within a few miles of Hillsboro; the order of approach was arranged, and the command went into camp for a few hours' rest. Silently, several hours before dawn, each man saddled up, mounted, and the force moved rapidly along the dark clay road with scarce a word between man and man. Fanning entered the old town by one road, and McNeill's force by another. Videttes were thrown out, a strong guard was posted at each cross-way, each road leading out of the town was guarded, and a dash was then made to secure Governor Burke, his staff, and all known leaders among the Whigs that could be found.

Their coming had been conducted with so much rapidity and secrecy it proved not only a great surprise but a great success. Governor Burke, not dreaming of the near proximity of so formidable a force, was unprepared for resistance, and awoke from a night of sweet rest to find his quaint old village capital invaded; his dwelling surrounded by a cordon of troopers, heavily armed; his staff and other officials were in similar plight, and there was nothing left but to surrender and submit to an enforced captivity. Fanning's men had a spirited encounter with the guard who held in charge the jail, wherein were confined a few Tory prisoners. The guard, seeing that the Governor and all their

lers were captives, attempted a ruse by placing in ir hats a bunch of oat-straw, and then attempting to e through the Tory guards, thus making their escape. nning's quick eye perceived the difference between ck tails (the badge of the Tories) and oat-straw; d, pronouncing them rebels, began cutting right and ft with his sabre, and but few of them escaped ptivity.

Never before or since has old Hillsboro been the ene of such revel as followed the capture of Gov- rnor Burke. Many of the Tories, elated at their suc- ess, defied all authority; and a scene of riot and plun- er ensued. Stores were broken open, liquor flowed freely, and debauchery and robbery were the order of at least one day in Hillsboro. Many of the marauders became too drunk to obey orders or to follow the re- treating columns of McNeill and Fanning, and were held captives by an indignant and outraged people.

The capture of Governor Burke and his officials was sad news, and seemed to travel with the speed of light- ning from farm-house to farm-house, until it had reached the ears of many brave, strong men, who speedily resolved to attempt his rescue and endeavor to wipe out the stain of his capture by a signal victory.

While this was not accomplished, a noble fight was made, and our next chapter will give a brief glimpse at the Battle of Cane Creek.

CHAPTER XII

THE BATTLE OF CANE CREEK

"Yonder comes old Blaze, and Dr. Tony rides like he bore tidings," said Amen Scurlock, as he sat on his porch talking with Luke Stallings and Joel Sowell a few days after the arrival of Colonel Paisly in the neighborhood. The recruiting had gone on bravely since his arrival, and the Colonel had added ten good men to his company, which now included Charley Sheering, Luke Stallings and Joel Sowell. The scouting Paisly had done had revealed the fact that Fanning's whole command had really left Brush Creek neighborhood; and he was now satisfied that they would be heard from in some daring attempt. He had gone over to Corneal Tyson's this very afternoon to find out how soon Charley Sheering would be ready for service; and Charley was at that moment on the way back with him. He was anxious to return to Guilford, finish recruiting his command, and to join General Greene's army as speedily as possible. Luke was quite well enough for light service; and, although his arm was still bandaged, he was anxious to see active duty in the regular army.

"Dr. Tony does seem in a hurry, Daddy," said Luke, as all three of the watchers on the porch now walked down toward the horse-blocks to meet him.

"Glad to see ye, Old Sides, what's the news?" said Scurlock.

Dr. Tony hitched Old Blaze, hurriedly slung his saddlebags over his left arm, and turning toward them, said, "Dag-goned bad news! sartainly the devil is loose."

"What's the matter?" exclaimed Scurlock, while Luke and Joel looked inquiringly at the doctor.

"I thought that wolf Fanning was plottin' mischief. He and those devilish Scotch Tories hain't done a thing but captured Governor Burke, his staff, and a whole caboodle more. Dag-gone me if I know what our people are a-doin' anyhow; let a lot of marauders ride right across our country and break up the government."

Amen Scurlock was amazed at the news, and Luke and Joel were mad enough to forget the good advice Father Rowe had so often given them about swearing.

At last Scurlock exclaimed, "Are you sure it's true, Tony?"

"True! I wish it wasn't, for it's going to prolong the fight in our section, and cost a good many lives, too."

"'Tis no more than I expected; that is, that they would try to take Governor Burke; but I hope they had a fight for it. And oh, that I could have been there!" was Luke's earnest utterance.

"Tim Shaw told me," said Tony, "that thar wa'n't a quart of blood spilt in the whole affair. They just marched in, got their men, looted the town, leavin' some chronic drunks, and then marched out again."

"They should not be allowed to get down to Raft Swamp, their safe harbor, without a fight. Once they get there 'tis easy for them to get their prisoners to Wilmington," said Luke. "Surely there are true Whigs

enough in Chatham and Orange Counties to thrash Fanning's gang and the Scotch, too."

"Yonder comes Colonel Paisly and Charley Sheering; let's see what they say about it," said Joel.

As Colonel Paisly and Charley Sheering rode rapidly up to the group as they still stood in the shade by the horse-blocks, Luke said:

"My surmise has proved true, Colonel; Fanning's gang and the Scotch have captured Governor Burke, looted the old town of Hillsboro, and are in full retreat for Wilmington."

"Do any of you know the country roads along which they are likely to pass, Luke?"

"We do, Colonel," answered Luke. "They will be making a bee-line for Raft Swamp, and will take all the by-roads they can."

"Their nighest road," said Joel, "would take them from Hillsboro due south, and they would pass about five miles to west of Pittsboro; but they will no doubt cross Haw River and come down the west bank, which would fling them a little west of a south'ard course."

"If we were to go almost due north from here, Colonel, we would, in less than a forty-mile ride, strike the head of their column," said Charley. "What good could less than twenty men do, boys? I do not suppose they have less than seven hundred men. One thing we can do, and that is, make a circuit around through the lower edge of Hawfields, and join whatever force is mustered against them; it is a hard ride but worth trying. We must mount and away as soon as Aunt Mandy can give us supper."

There was hurry and bustle at Skin Quarter, for it was now nearly sunset, and Aunt Mandy knew that the Colonel, Luke and all the rest should be on the road

by the time the stars began to shine in place of the waning daylight.

"Hurry up, Anachy; have plenty of corn-pone and hot hoe-cakes, and a broiled chicken extra for each of 'em to take along to bite on, for they won't stop for any breakfast, you may be sure," said Aunt Mandy as she bustled around between the cookroom and the table, spread on the long back porch.

"I am glad ye got here in time for a hot supper, Dr. Tony," said Aunt Mandy as she called the gentlemen to the table.

"After grace, I'll tell ye just how glad I was to get here, Aunt Mandy," replied the Doctor, and all bent their heads as Amen Scurlock asked God's blessing upon the meal, and upon those who were soon to face danger, and possibly even death. "You see, Aunt Mandy," continued Dr. Tony, "I forage around a good deal, and my old stomach has to experiment to no end upon tough pies and leather hoe-cakes. As I was ridin' along this afternoon, the bearer of bad news, thar was but one bright spot, and that was, I had your supper table before my longing eyes. I am here, and now to the business of the hour."

Supper over, all realized that the parting before them was for months; Charley Sheering had left brave Hannah in tears, but Spartan-like, bidding him return victorious in life, or conquered only by death. Joel pressed his weeping wife and the little babe to his heart, and brushing his rough, homespun coat sleeve across his eyes, stood ready to mount. Colonel Paisly heartily shook hands with each of the friends he was leaving behind, saying to Amen Scurlock, "Good-by, my dear friend; I am indebted to you for much hospitality, and shall never forget you." To Aunt Mandy

he said, "God bless and protect you, madam, and give you back your sweet daughter in happier and more peaceful days. I shall often, when sleeping on the bare ground or on the edge of two rails, think of your sweet home of restful comfort; God bless you all."

Aunt Mandy had entrusted Luke with a letter for Polly Rutherford, and took him a little to one side that she might take more tender leave of him, for she loved Luke very much as a mother might love. With her arms over his tall, broad shoulders, she said:

"Give this letter to our gal, Luke; and if she will let you, give her a dozen kisses from her old mammy, and I'll give 'em to you now. Be good to yourself, boy; fear God, and ye'll have no need to fear your enemies. I know you will be brave; and may the God of battles watch over ye all, and fetch ye back home in peace."

Joel Sowell's place had been used as the headquarters of Colonel Paisly's recruits, and when Dr. Tony and Amen, who, with the women folk, had followed our troopers through the dim starlight out to the horse rack, had given the last hand-shake, and Luke, who had constituted himself bugler, sounded the call, each man vaulted into the saddle, and following the lead of Joel, they departed at a brisk gallop toward the Sowell place to gather up their force and depart for the scene of action.

"Aunt Mandy," said Dr. Tony, "if we had five thousand such men as them, we would chase Cornwallis into the sea before frost comes. I am mighty afeard, though, that some of the dear boys won't get back;" and the old doctor's voice quavered, and his big eyes looked very watery.

"We must trust 'em to the keepin' of the Lord, Dr.

Tony; if it's His will, they'll surely come back; and if not, He has taken them out of a heap o' trouble."

"That's so, Aunt Mandy; it looks like, just now, that trouble's the biggest part of life; but I reckon when it's all over we will have had quite as much of the good of it as our cussedness deserved; so I am just livin' from day to day, takin' things like they come, the good luck and the bad luck."

"I am takin' things, Tony, as the Lord sends 'em. Amen Scurlock takes no happen chances. You must recognize a God in all events; what He don't order, He permits, even if the devil seems to have his own way sometimes."

"Would you be so piously resigned, Amen, if the Tories was to come and burn you out of house and home like they tried to do for Joel Sowell?" asked Dr. Tony.

"I should try to be, Tony; and would look upon such a calamity as one of the things He didn't order, but permitted. But, if my old rifle would arrest the permit, I should feel bound to save my property."

"Now, that sounds like Amen Scurlock," said Dr. Tony with a broad smile on his face. "I think a man under the necessity for savin' his property could shoot Tories to the glory of God; and I don't mean any sacrilege, neither, when I say it."

"It is certainly Christian duty to resist evil, Tony; but I hope I won't be called upon to do it in that way. Let's go in and take a smoke before goin' to bed."

Colonel Paisly found his men at Sowell's place, through cooking supper, and pickets had been placed as usual, to prevent anything like a surprise from any straggling band of Tories that might be passing. He soon ordered in the pickets, boot and saddle was

sounded, and speedily every trooper was ready for the long march. Paisly had never led a better mounted troop; Sheering had exchanged one of his horses with Corneal Tyson for a full brother of Fanning's Red Buck; Luke's Sorrel Top was a horse of great action, muscle and power; and Joel's horse was but little inferior to those of Sheering and Stallings. The Colonel also was well mounted upon a large black gelding, with wind and bottom that gave him great advantage in a charge or a long march. The remainder of the troop were fairly mounted, and the speed they were able to make that cool September night was a surprise even to the eager company striving to reach their enemy in time to aid in an attempted rescue of the Governor.

The night passed rapidly, and as the mist began to rise along a dimly defined belt of timber in the distance, Colonel Paisly asked Charley Sheering, who rode at his right hand:

"Where are we, Charley, and is that Haw River we are approaching?"

"We are now among the Red Hills of Orange; yes, that is Haw River. It is only about ten miles to Hawfields, now; and we should keep a lookout for our friends, if they are coming, Colonel."

"We have been keeping to the left, or westward, and have passed around the enemy, but the road we are on should be the one by which our friends should come," said Luke.

"Very well," said Paisly; "we will advance as far as the river and there await events; that will give our horses time to blow, at any rate, for we have given them a hard night's work."

The keen eyes of Luke and Charley were on the lookout as they drew near a ford, and, dismounting,

they picketed their horses in a grassy spot and crept through the thick bushes that lined the bank, to a point on the bluff overhanging the spot where the road entered the river. From this spot they could see the opposite bank and a little piece of the road leading to it, and they eagerly watched for any sign of approach of troops from the Hawfields settlement. They were soon joined by Colonel Paisly, and as they watched and waited, each man opened his homespun haversack and made a vigorous attack upon the hoe-cakes and cold chicken Aunt Mandy had so thoughtfully provided, while the Colonel began the conversation by words of praise for the Chatham County people.

"I am glad I came to Chatham, boys, for besides recruiting ten good fighting men, I have made friends with some noble people. Luke, you are a lucky fellow to have won the confidence and love of Daddy Scurlock and Aunt Mandy. They won my heart completely, and I shall treasure my visit there as a sweet memory. That old uncle of yours, Corneal Tyson, is a strong character, Charley, and you have a wife that should content the heart of any man. If these people are a fair sample (with Joel Sowell and his pretty wife thrown in) of Chatham County folk, I should be well content to dwell among them."

"Ah, Colonel, no one but Luke Stallings knows how the love and friendliness of Daddy and Aunt Mandy Scurlock are treasured up in here;" and Luke laid his hand over his heart. "I was a poor orphan boy, never saw my father, and my mother died when I was born. When I got big enough to work (before that I stayed about among the neighbors, mostly at Daddy Scurlock's), I went to live with old Parson Rowe, and was striker in his blacksmith shop when you wouldn't have

thought I could sling a sledge. No Sunday passed when we had preaching at Brush Creek, that I did not go home with the Scurlocks and spend Sunday night. That was the only real home I ever knew. With Charley, here, it was different; he always had a home and was worth a good property from the start."

"I shouldn't complain," said Charley. "My dear old Daddy lived to start me in the right road to success in life—if I only keep the road—and my mother was one of the people I am sure I will find in Heaven if I ever get there. Uncle Corneal Tyson is about the oddest makeup I ever saw in any one man. When he loves, he loves; when he hates, he hates; and while he says he is a Loyalist, he spends more money on the quiet to help poor Whigs than any man in Chatham, unless it be Daddy Scurlock. But look yonder, Colonel! there is a good bit of dust along that piece of road as you come down to the ford; our folks must be a-comin'."

Colonel Paisly drew from a leather case swung over his shoulder a rare thing never before seen by either Luke or Charley, and gazing through it, exclaimed:

"Thank God! they are coming. I can see Colonel Alexander Mebane riding in front with an officer and staff, and they are making rapidly toward the ford and are throwing out videttes to be sure of a clear crossing."

"What is that you are looking through, Colonel?" asked Luke.

"'Tis a field glass; take a peep and tell me how many men you see, Luke."

Luke placed the glass to his eye, and his bright face gleamed with intelligence and surprise as he began counting.

"Gracious me! Colonel, there is a big lot of 'em, and it looks like we could almost touch 'em. Just look through, Charley; I never saw anything like it before."

Charley surveyed from their elevated position on the bluff the approaching force, saying, with great satisfaction:

"It's a glorious sight, Colonel; I suppose you'll meet a lot o' friends from over thar about Hawfields; and it's my opinion we are going to have a hot fight to-day."

"I think so, too, Charley," replied the Colonel. "Let us descend to the river bank and welcome the little army we must depend on to-day; many of them are my old friends."

"Before we start, tell me, Colonel, where you got this seeing thing from?" asked Luke. His interest in the field glass was thoroughly aroused, for he recognized its value to a soldier.

"I can tell you just as well as we go along, Luke; I captured the glass at the battle of Guilford Court House from a dapper-looking little British major, who swore hard at giving up the 'seein' thing,' as you call it. I could not afford to let an enemy keep so rare and useful a weapon as that, for they are costly and hard to get this side of New York or Philadelphia; but I did not give him over a guinea for it."

While Colonel Paisly was speaking, they had descended from the bluff, had reached the bank of the stream, and were now awaiting the nearer approach of the head of the Continental column, having already signaled the videttes. By the side of General Butler rode Colonel Alexander Mebane, who, recognizing Colonel Paisly, called out:

"Where in the world did you come from, Paisly? I thought you were with General Greene."

"From wandering to and fro picking up recruits; I have sixteen good men up here on the bluff equipped and ready for this fight to-day, Colonel Mebane. Those of them that come off scatheless I shall take to General Greene's army, for we sorely need them."

"Bravo! Paisly; we should like to get such recruits at every fence corner, for Fanning and the Scotch renegades are going to give us trouble to-day. Did you meet any of our scouts?"

"No, Colonel Mebane; there is a fork in the road several miles back, and they doubtless took the left hand road there as you go south, while we came into this road from a right fork. We did not care to meet the enemy until we could reach your force."

Colonel Mebane and General Butler were now safely over the river, and followed Paisly and his men up the hill to where Paisly's little troop were stationed. Mebane presented Colonel Paisly to General Butler, who gladly welcomed him and his men, and told him he would have them ride near the front, and they should have a post of honor in the day's encounter.

"How far ahead of us do you think our enemy is, General?" asked Paisly.

"We cannot tell until our scouts come in; they are circling around to the front and forming some idea of which road they will take in going south."

The column was now in rapid motion, and, as they drew near to the forks of the road we have heretofore mentioned, a horseman was seen rapidly approaching them.

"There comes tidings," said Mebane; "and you can rely on that fellow."

The scout approached, halted his horse with a sudden strong pull, and lifting his cap, said quickly:

"General, the enemy are heading for Cane Creek and moving rapidly."

"Good!" said the General; "there is no better point to check them than where this road we take below here crosses the creek. Forward!"

The command, "Forward," was taken up along the line, and soon the moving host was enveloped in red dust, as the Continentals pressed forward to secure a good position on the south bank of Cane Creek before their enemy should reach the crossing.

Meanwhile, we will take a glimpse at the Tory force, and record one or two scenes in their camp the night before the battle. There was much jealousy between Fanning's followers, and Colonel Hector McNeill and the Scotch people who followed his banner. As Fanning, Steve Walker and Jack Rains sat by their campfire on the night following the day they had spent in Hillsboro, they talked of the scenes through which they had passed, and each man evinced a feeling of jealousy and bitter dislike to the "clannish Scotch devils," as Walker called them.

"We just couldn't help ourselves, Colonel," said Walker. "We needed all the men we had, but, if you had been able to muster three hundred men like our boys, we would have done the job, and no thanks to Hector McNeill. Now the Scotch will claim the day."

"They shall not claim the day, Steve; they shall divide honors with me," replied the Colonel. "Besides, we are not through with this job yet. I look for hard fighting before we can get our prisoners safely beyond this devilish Whig country."

"A poor fight they'll put up, Colonel," exclaimed Jack Rains. "Why, they scattered like skeered sheep

to-day. I can take our squad and run the lot into Haw River."

"Not so fast, Rains; you will see a desperate fight, mind what I say. And there are men in their ranks that have got you and Walker and me spotted; so look out."

"I shall look out, Colonel; and if I go to the undiskivered country to-morrow I will take along with me the biggest leader I can pick out from among the Whigs."

"Nevertheless, you would be dead, all the same, Jack; and I should lose one of my best fighters. But let us keep the peace with these Scotch folk. They are a cranky lot, but will fight anything that stands in front of 'em; and old Hector McNeill has a heart of gold and truly loves the King's cause."

"But he stands in your way, Colonel," said Steve Walker. "He is so high and mighty, and holds his men to be so much better than 'Fanning's gang,' as they call us. I want them to do the hard fighting to-morrow; then if 'Fanning's gang' has to save 'em from destruction, you will get some of the credit. As things stand now, it's Hector McNeill has captured Governor Burke."

"Never fear but Fanning will get his own, Steve Walker. We will do our duty when the time comes, and I will see that history is writ right by doin' something she is bound to record. But we had all as well turn in and get what rest we may, for the orders be to march before daylight."

Around Colonel Hector McNeill's campfire sat young Duncan Ray, Dushee Shaw, Captain McLean, and a few friends among the rank and file who loved to be near and to hear their leader tell of the past. Colonel Dushee Shaw, a youth in years but a soldier in his

courageous bearing, was much beloved, not only by his old Colonel, but by the men under him; and his cheery voice seemed full of earnest remonstrance as he replied to his venerable commander:

"Nay, nay, Colonel McNeill, bid your fears away; death has no claim on ye yet."

"Na, na, I ha' no fears, laddie, for deith ha' looked me i' the face many times afore; but somewhat tells me it was to be me last fecht. I been thinkin' a' day o' Culloden Moor and the brave stand we made for Prince Charley, and how the licht went out at sunset upon the house o' Stuart. Then o' the exile from auld Scotland, and the oath, yea, the oath. 'Tis not a King on the throne, Dushee, lad, but our oath to the Crown that brings us a-field to-day. We ha' mony friends, Dushee, lad, in yon ranks; they will fecht for hame an' rooftree. It will be a sair battle. I see a field o' bluid, an' mine will flow in sic a stream ma life will go out like the tide fra' Firth o' Clyde."

"I pray thee, speak not thus, my dear Colonel," urged Duncan Ray. "I will take any position of danger that shall shield thee."

"And I!" cried young Shaw.

"A McNeill is ever at the front o' battle, lads; naethin' houlds back one o' the name. I shall stand in me lot; he w'u'dna be a McNeill that would do less. Go to sleep, lads, that we may waken strong for duty. Good night." And the brave old Colonel prepared to seek his last night's rest as a soldier of King George.

The main crossing at Cane Creek was well guarded by the force that Colonel Mebane and General Butler had hastily gathered; and so well had their presence been secreted that the advance column of Tories were actually crossing the creek, without a suspicion of

danger, when a volley from the Whigs carried death and wounds into their ranks and caused both consternation and a pause. McNeill, although brave, was prudent, and at the first fire ordered his men to retreat out of range, as an advance at that stage of the engagement only meant slaughter. Colonel McDugal here swore at his superior officer, intimating cowardice in a man who had stood in the forefront of battle on many a field, and who knew not to fear the face of man. The order to retreat was countermanded, and, with the bravery that belonged to his race, Colonel Hector McNeill led the advance and fell at the next volley, his manly form pierced by no less than six shots. Beside him lay Colonel Dushee Shaw, who, keeping near his beloved commander, had shared his fate, falling with the dew of his youth upon him, both of them enemies to Colonial freedom, but honored in their death by the humblest soldier of the Continental cause, because they were just as well as chivalric.

Colonel Fanning, seeing the stubborn resistance of the Whigs and fearing the retaking of the prisoners, determined to attempt the crossing of the creek at another point and an attack upon his enemy in the rear. In the crossing he was successful, and it was here that Colonel Paisly's gallant little troop did such fighting as Fanning and Jack Rains had not expected, for under Paisly's leadership they fought like veterans. Led by the impetuous Fanning, the charge of his men was almost irresistible; and the conflict was bloody, indeed, for men who knew and hated his gang opposed him.

"Yonder is that devil, Fanning," exclaimed Charley Sheering. "Now it's 'Lightning' against 'Red Buck,'" and putting spurs to his fiery charger (the horse giving forth wild neighs), Sheering made a rush for Fanning;

and, although riding at full speed, took deliberate aim with a well-charged rifle, and had the satisfaction of seeing Fanning drop his arm.

Sheering was anxious to capture Fanning; but his watchful friend, Steve Walker, seeing his leader wounded, quickly came to his aid, and, not without a struggle, bore him from the field. So Charley continued to pay old scores by disabling at least one or two more of the gang before the engagement closed.

Luke Stallings made a desperate effort to reach Steve Walker; but the wounding of Fanning proved a providence to Walker and took that especial enemy out of his reach, leaving him a free fighter; and Ed Edwards, another hated member of the Fanning Troop, fell by his sword, although a spent ball, passing through his chapeau, gave him a scalp wound that proved painful.

It was toward the close of the fight that Jack Rains, who had been trying all through the day to single out the Whig leaders as targets for his vicious rifle, succeeded in killing Major Nall, a gallant Chatham soldier, a brave defender of the Continental cause and much beloved. Delighted with the result of his marksmanship, he hurriedly dashed up to where Colonel Paisly, Charley Sheering and Joel Sowell sat upon their horses, during a lull in the battle, evidently thinking that he was approaching a group of Fanning's men. As he drew near, his savage face was aglow with satanic joy, and he exclaimed exultantly:

"Another rebel leader gone. I have just killed Major Nall."

Scarcely had he stopped speaking before three pistols were drawn and quickly fired, each ball finding its mark in the brutal heart of Jack Rains. The

prophecy of David Fanning had been speedily fulfilled—Jack Rains was dead.

The battle of Cane Creek was bloody and fruitless as to its object. Fanning's troop and the Scotch forces, now under the command of McDugal, withdrew from the field, and succeeded in reaching the shelter of Raft Swamp and their favorite camping ground at McPhaul's Mill. Here Governor Burke and all the Continental prisoners were placed in charge of a Scotch escort commanded by Colonel Ray, and delivered to Major Craig, the British commander at Wilmington.

All pursuit seemed vain; and this daring deed, a great mortification to all true Continentals, gave David Fanning and his lawless troop encouragement to perpetrate many dark and bloody atrocities before the final close of the struggle. Many of the prisoners languished in prison ships or stockades many long and weary months. Governor Burke succeeded in making his escape from prison in April of 1782, and resumed his office as Governor at Old Salem, the Moravian settlement.

CHAPTER XIII

DR. TONY SIDEBOTTOM DECIDES "TO RESK IT"

After the departure of Colonel Paisly and his brave boys in quest of their enemy, Amen Scurlock and Dr. Tony Sidebottom sat on the front porch at Skin Quarter, smoking and talking, until long after Roxy Sowell and the baby were in the land of dreams; and Aunt Mandy, who had been setting her bread to rise and bustling about to get things in order for the night, finally joined them.

"Looks as if you and Amen was about to spend the night out here, Dr. Tony. S'pose I fetch you both a shakedown."

"Is beds skerce, Aunt Mandy? If so, a shakedown'll do."

"Now, Tony Sidebottom! when did you ever find beds skerce at Skin Quarter?"

"Never in my born days, Aunt Mandy; 'xcuse my sass, but I am kinder rattled, bein' as Amen has been ridin' the marryin' hobby horse ag'in, and has made me feel as if I was little better'n a dog because I have no wife at Hardscrabble. I do live like a dog, that's a fact; the best room at my place is whar I put winter apples and shelled peas, and the rats has about taken the place. I do have as good a feather bed as yourn, Aunt Mandy, thanks to my flock o' geese and old Dicey; but it's dag-goned hard livin' the way I live."

"It is high time Old Dicey and Hardscrabble had a

mistress, Dr. Tony Sidebottom; and I just want to know what you are a-waitin' for? You are certainly old enough, and you ought to have plenty to take care of Cynthy; you are wastin' precious time."

"Oh, I've heard all that, Aunt Mandy, before; and Amen has preached me a reg'lar sermon, and painted Cynthy like unto an angel; but somehow I'm a little afeard of red hear. They tell me folks with red hear are vig'rous tempered, and don't mind pullin' a fellow's wool if he don't squar' to thar notions. Now, if I was bald-headed I might resk it; but you know, Aunt Mandy, I have a most uncommon growth of hear, and its roots is very firmly set; they used to call me 'Absalom' on account of my hear. Now, if me and Cynthy should not set horses, as the sayin' goes, and she should tangle my wool with her long, slim fingers, dag-goned if I would know what to do."

The merry laugh of Aunt Mandy and the shaking rumble of Amen Scurlock aroused Baby Sowell, but Roxy soon hushed the little one to sleep again, while Aunt Mandy called Dr. Tony to order.

"You rediculous man! you are enough to make a dog laugh, and you have made me rouse the baby. We must talk easy; and I want to tell a few things about Cynthy Shaw that maybe you don't know. Red hear, as you call it, ain't always a sign of temper, but it's a sure sign of talent; most of the idiots and insane folk don't have red heads."

"That's so, that's so, Aunt Mandy. Go on."

"Well, I happen to know that Cynthy Shaw has a temper as sweet as a May morn, but, where right and wrong is involved, she is as firm as rock-ribbed Pilot Mountain; an earthquake wouldn't shake her. If she loved you she would sacrifice any personal preference

for your good or pleasure. You know that little nigger gal they call 'Catnip,' that waits on Cynthy and tends in the dining room?"

"Yes, seen her many a time, and tended her when she was sick once."

"Well, that little creatur' was left an orphan; her mammy had been set free, and died on the county; her daddy died when she was less than a year old. Cynthy took Catnip and raised her, taught her how to help herself, and now, if you want a character for Cynthy, just ask Catnip what sort of woman her mistress is. I asked her the question once when Cynthy sent her here on an errand, and shall never forget her answer. 'What kind er 'oman Miss Cynthy? She ain't any 'oman 'tall; she's er angel, Miss Mandy. God Ermighty jest lent her to Mars' Tim er little while; some day she gwyin' to fly away to Heaben, where she b'long. I loves de groun' she steps on.' Once I had a spell of fever, Dr. Tony—'twas while you were away from home, and I was afeard I would suffer for your faithful visitations—and who do you s'pose pulled me through by the help of God? Why, Cynthy Shaw came over here one morning and fetched her carpet sack along, saying as she came into my room, 'I have come to stay with you, Aunt Mandy; and, God willing, we will soon quench this nasty fever that is burning you up.' Oh! but she knew what to do with a fever, Dr. Tony; and her dear fingers would drive away pain and sooth me to sleep many a time when, before she touched me, I felt as if I would go wild."

"You had better stop right thar, Aunt Mandy," said Dr. Tony. "Cynthy is too good for me now, and if you tell me any more about her I shall be afeard to go a-nigh her."

"Nonsense, Dr. Tony; you are not as bad as you pictur' yourself. I give Cynthy Shaw just a year to have you in trainin', and you will be the properest husband in Chatham County for your experience."

"Thank you, Aunt Mandy; that is a good thought to dream on, so I will say good night now, and to-morrow I think I will ride over to the crossroads and try my luck."

"That's a good resolution, Dr. Tony; and if you ever need any help, just call on Mandy Scurlock. Good night; you'll find your bed in Luke's room."

Old Blaze was brought around to the rack at Skin Quarter a little after sunrise on the following morning, and Dr. Tony was escorted out to the horse blocks by the entire family, including Roxy and the baby. As he had to pass Skin Quarter on his return from the crossroads to Hardscrabble, Aunt Mandy made the doctor promise to come by and spend the night, and tell them the news as to his luck. So he rode away with the best wishes of this little circle of friends, who loved the tender-hearted doctor and desired for him true happiness and a real home.

Cynthy Shaw was not expecting company, but was one of those ready people who never looked dowdy, and in her soft linsey gown and petticoat of dark blue, with an irregular dash of scarlet woven through it, and wearing a spotlessly white apron, and with her bunch of keys hanging from a silver eagle's beak in her girdle, she never kept visitors waiting, but gave them speedy audience. Dr. Tony had tied his horse in front of the shop, and, with saddlebags over his left arm, entered the door of the shop, finding Tim Shaw, as usual, at work with jack plain, saw and hammer.

"Good mornin', Tim; always at work."

"Good mornin', Dr. Tony; work is what I live by," and the old man kept on sawing.

"Any news, Tim?"

"Fightin' over on Cane Creek, I think, right now."

"Why, have you heard anything, Tim?"

"Not adzackly, but I calkerlate that the Whigs will overtake Fanning and McNeill about thar, and we will have news by to-morrow mornin'. It's goin' to be a hot scrimmage."

"I believe yer, Tim, so we will have to wait for the news. Where's Cynthy?"

"In the weavin' room; don't ye hear the loom?"

"B'lieve I do, Tim; surely she beats all for work."

"Like her old mother was afore I lost her; never idle a minute except when she was asleep."

"I'll go into the weavin' room a while, Tim, and see what Cynthy's up to; I like to see a woman at work."

"All right, Dr. Tony; stay and take a bite of dinner, and I'll have Old Blaze put up and fed."

"Don't care if I do, Tim; I know Cynthy has somethin' good to eat, and good things of any kind are precious skerce at Hardscrabble."

Thus saying, Dr. Tony walked into the dwelling, and, following the sound of the loom as it echoed through the house—shuttle, bang! bang!—he found himself in the wing room next to the kitchen. Cynthy, seated upon a high bench, with her back toward him, was weaving a rag carpet so industriously as to be oblivious of his presence; the sound—shuttle, bang! bang!—keeping time while she sang in sweet tones:

"Go to Jane Glover,
And tell her I love her;
And, by the light of the moon,
I will come to her."

The old ditty was one he had in childhood heard his mother sing, and he stood motionless as Cynthy sang on, finally seating himself in an old split-bottom chair just inside the door, to gather courage enough to arouse Cynthy to a realization of the fact that he was there. There was a momentary lull in the shuttle, bang! bang! and Dr. Tony said in a most explosive way, "Ahem!"

Without turning her head, but intently examining some part of her work, Cynthy said, "That you, daddy?"

"I haven't that honor, Miss Cynthy," exclaimed Dr. Tony, as, with a merry laugh, he arose and came near her. "You are the dag-gondest—pardon me, Miss Cynthy—gal for work I ever did see. Don't you ever get tired?"

"Why, Dr. Tony! how long have you been in here?"

"Quite a spell, Miss Cynthy; when I came in you was a-singin' an old song my mammy used to sing: 'Go to Jane Glover.'"

"Oh, Dr. Tony! did you hear that nonsense? Why did you not call me when you first came in?"

"Why, I just wanted to watch you at work, Miss Cynthy; and I wouldn't take a dozen raccoon skins for just havin' seen ye when yer didn't know it—you looked so peart and pretty sittin' thar, and weavin' and singin' like you was so happy. Oh, it was a pictur' I won't forget soon, Miss Cynthy, I can tell ye. Did you weave that gown you have on, Miss Cynthy?"

"Yes, Dr. Tony; and the suit daddy wears for every day, and his Sunday's best black, too."

"Well, dag-gone me!—excuse me, Miss Cynthy, but that most jostled the breath out of me. I thought you got them fine things wove by old Anister Coffee—you know she's famous in Chatham and Orange."

"I never get any one to do for me what I can quite as well do for myself, Dr. Tony. I have been weaving since I was fifteen years old."

"Well, I never! But this puts me in mind, Miss Cynthy, to speak of what fetched me here to-day."

Miss Cynthy kept her seat on the high loom bench, while Dr. Tony moved the old split-bottom conveniently near and balanced himself on the hind legs of the chair.

"Really, now, can't ye guess what fetched me here, Miss Cynthy?"

"How should I, Dr. Tony? I thought you had been to see some sick folk and just stopped in."

"Not a bit of it, Miss Cynthy; I have business and special business, too."

"Did you not see daddy in the shop, Dr. Tony?"

"Yes, I did, but this business needn't reach him until later. So you can't guess?"

"No; I have always associated you and your business, Dr. Tony, with sick folks, and, as I am alarmingly healthy, surely you can have no business with me."

"Let me look at your tongue and feel your pulse, Miss Cynthy. 'Pears to me like your cheeks are powerful red; you might have a little fever."

"Not a bit of it, Dr. Tony; but here is my tongue," and she also extended her plump, dainty hand, saying:

"Examine my pulse, too, if that will satisfy you."

Dr. Tony opened his big blue eyes and gazed critically at the pretty tongue, while he held Cynthy's hand in his a long time. With a sweet smile and a puzzled look in her winsome face, she watched the doctor and waited his next movement. He drew nearer to her,

still holding her hand and pressing it gently; then, looking earnestly into that puzzled face, he said:

"I am not satisfied; so far as health goes, I would have to give you a certificate, but, Miss Cynthy, I am not satisfied—that is just what's the matter with me. I've got what folks call a home, but thar is nobody thar but old Dicey and a bob-tailed fice dog, that ever cares whether I come or go. My best room is full of apples, yams and shelled peas; my front yard's got a few sickly lookin' hollyhocks and a sunflower or two, but jimson weed grows faster than the flowers. I am tired of livin' with the dog and the nigger; no, Miss Cynthy, I am not satisfied."

"I am sorry for you, indeed I am, Dr. Tony; you must live in great discomfort. But how do you propose to better your condition?"

"Ah! now we are gettin' at the business that fetched me here, Miss Cynthy. My remedy is to get married. Lonesome ain't any word to tell what it is for me to live at Hardscrabble like I am a-livin'; and, while marryin' is sometimes a resky business, in physic we doctors say, 'desperate cases requires desperate remedies.'"

"You seem to be in a desperate humor this morning, Dr. Tony; how about *your* pulse and tongue? Perhaps you are a little bilious, and the world all looks like the yellow jaundice."

"Now, Miss Cynthy, I didn't think you would make fun of what is so serious. My liver is as right as a trivet. My trouble is a heart trouble, Miss Cynthy."

"You haven't the complexion of one with heart trouble, Dr. Tony; such people are usually very pallid, but you have plenty of color."

"Thar 'tis ag'in. Yes, I've got color enough to-day to make a hollyhock blush, but the heart trouble is thar,

all the same, and you don't seem to realize the cause of it."

"That I don't, Dr. Tony; but if I can help you or speak a good word to the fair one who is troubling your heart for you (if such there be), I will gladly do it."

"Then begin talking to yourself, Miss Cynthy, for 'tis you that is at the bottom of all my troubles. Just tell yourself that I, Dr. Tony Sidebottom, love you better than a violet loves a cool spot, better than a sunflower loves the sun, better than any earthly bein' loves you, and it is 'get you' or dwell on in misery. Don't say anything yet, for I ain't through. I know I am rough, and mebbe you mought do a sight better in the way of refineties and luxuries, but no man can love you like I do, Miss Cynthy; and you would have me, sich as I am, all to yourself. I've got no father, no mother, neither brother nor sister, and have nobody in all this lonesome wide world to give any love to but you. As for takin' care of you, I've got plenty, and you could make Hardscrabble just what you pleased; and I promise to be as tender to you as Roxy Sowell is to her baby. I get mad sometimes and say swear words, mostly 'dag-gone,' but my tempers is like a b'ilin' pot—quick over and done with—and you shall teach me to be a better man. You are a Christian woman and belong to them folks that b'lieve 'what is to be will be if it never is'; and so far as I am anything, I go with them, too. So I offer you a mission field right at home, and fear it will be quite as much heathen ground as you could want. Once get me converted, and we will have a meetin' house of our own, for old Father Rowe's 'gospel according to King George' is about all we ever git at Brush Creek, and I'm gittin'

tired of that. Now, Miss Cynthy, think all this over, and if you say 'yea and amen,' I will chorus hallelujah! I will see you after dinner," and, without waiting for Cynthy to make any reply, Dr. Tony pulled his broad-brimmed wool hat over his eyes and stalked out into the shop to await her call to dinner, which was given about an hour thereafter.

Thus left in the weaving room alone, Cynthy drew a long breath and exclaimed, "Gracious alive! a perfect thunderstorm with a clear sky. I was quite startled, and really did not know that dear old Dr. Tony had so much feeling; how hard it is to find out some people! Doubtless he has been thinking of this a long time. Well, really he is not so very old—about fifty, I should say—and I was thirty-five my last birthday. I always did like the old fellow, but he wants me to do more than that; and what does my heart say? I am certainly sorry for him; I pity his absolutely lonely condition; and he certainly needs somebody. Well, yes, I think I could love and pet the old fellow right smart if he was all mine; and a little petting and loving would make a different man of him. But I must go and help Catnip dish up dinner."

The dinner was a dainty meal, well served, and it gave Dr. Tony a bright vision of a white tablecloth, a bright copper teapot, and a bonny face behind it in the little room at Hardscrabble, where he now took his lonely meals, with Bob, the fice dog, under the table, and Dicey to wait on him. After dinner the doctor remained in the dining room while Tim Shaw returned to his work, but he was not a little puzzled at Dr. Tony's 'queer shines,' as he called them, muttering to himself:

"Dr. Tony's kinder doty to-day; wonder what's

Dr. Tony Sidebottom Concludes "To Resk It"

frizzled his feathers? Seems to hang around Cynthy like a fly buzzin' around a m'lasses jug. He's liable to get stuck at that business, and I don't want it; don't want any man to come in betwixt me and my only gal."

Cynthy kept her hands very busy washing up and putting away the dinner things, her plump figure flitting about; the doctor looking on, but remaining as quiet as a mouse. At last the corner cupboard was closed, and Cynthy, finding nothing more to employ her or to delay the inevitable, smoothed down her spotless apron and took a seat in an armchair not far from the window that gave her a view of the main road. Her face was bright and serene, although there was a sober look about her merry eyes, and she was evidently being moved by new and conflicting emotions. Several minutes passed; the doctor could distinctly hear the ticking of his old bull's-eye watch; and the silence was broken by Dr. Tony, who asked anxiously:

"Well, Miss Cynthy, what do you think of Dr. Tony Sidebottom as a husband, and Hardscrabble as a home?"

Cynthy was no sentimental girl, but she was a warm-hearted woman, and realized that she was deciding and answering two great questions, so far as her life was concerned. Looking up to the doctor—for he had now arisen from his seat and stood near her—she said softly:

"You have given me a great deal to think about, Dr. Tony, and a very short time to do my thinking."

"They say love travels as fast as sunlight, Miss Cynthy; at that rate, it don't take long to think as to whether you love Tony Sidebottom or not."

The blush that mantled Cynthy's cheeks was the advance courier to her answer. "I have always thought

well of you, Dr. Tony, and feel that your life has been one of self-sacrifice—a very loveless life. I little thought, when we began this talk this morning, that your feelings toward me were so tender, so really lover-like, and—well, I appreciate such love and have made up my mind—and my heart goes with it—to try and make up to you some of the lost love of your life; and I hope the Lord will enable me to be to you all that you desire."

Cynthy soon found herself lifted out of her seat and clasped in the strong arms of Dr. Tony, while in stentorian voice he shouted, "Hallelujah! Hallelujah!"

Dr. Tony relinquished his grasp upon Cynthy just as old Tim Shaw walked in from the shop, exclaiming:

"What's all this fuss about, Dr. Tony; are you and Cynthy holding a camp meeting?"

Dr. Tony only walked up and down the room, exclaiming, "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! I feel like I've got religion!" While Cynthy, blushing and almost crying, said:

"I have promised Dr. Tony to love him and to marry him, Daddy; and he has had so little love in his life it looks as if he just can't realize it."

"Thunderation! Cynthy, have you gone crazy, too? What is your old daddy to do, I'd like to know?"

This question seemed to bring Dr. Tony Sidebottom back to himself; and, grasping Tim Shaw by the hand, he said:

"You will have two homes instead of one, Tim; all I have shall be Cynthy's, and, if you'll come and live with us up to Hardscrabble, I will build you a shop right thar. You can rent out Crossroads and be as independent as a hog on ice—slide whar you please.

I never was happy before, Tim. They say marryin' is a kind o' lottery; be it so, I'll resk it with Cynthy."

"Well, I s'pose I have nothin' to say; maybe Cynthy can make two men happy," was Tim's answer, as he walked away to the shop to finish a coffin.

It was about sunset as Dr. Tony reached Skin Quarter and tied Old Blaze at the rack. Amen and Aunt Mandy were on the lookout for him; and as he started up to the porch from the gate, she called out:

"What luck, Dr. Tony?"

With a broad grin on his face, he exclaimed, "Hallelujah! Hallelujah!" and his friends knew that Dr. Tony Sidebottom was happy, and they rejoiced with him.

tongue and begins to cast a spell over her with his sparkling eyes."

"Now, isn't that the truth, Polly dear, if ever you spoke it? You talk like you had some experience. I am looking for John Paisly here this very night; had a message from him only yesterday that he had returned from Chatham and would spend Sunday with me on his way to the army. Come right along with me into the dining-room, and I will beg brother Caldwell to let me keep you over Sunday."

"No, dear Mrs. Gordon, I had better not stay," urged Polly, and her sweet face was crimsoned with a blush that did not escape Mrs. Gordon.

"Oh, but you must, child; I am going straight to Parson Caldwell now;" and, without more ado, the rotund figure of Mrs. Gordon led the way to the drawing-room. She entered talking—Aunt Patsy loved to talk.

"Please excuse us, Brother Caldwell, for leaving you so long; I thought Rafe would have been here before now. Oh, here he comes. Rafe, why are you so late? The doctor has been lonely."

Rafe Gordon, as all his neighbors called him, was a tall, spare man with blond complexion and thin flaxen hair, a domelike forehead, bright gray eyes, a large mouth, and handsome teeth. His smile was like sunlight, and his cordial manner made him a great favorite, and he was one of Dr. Caldwell's most honored elders at Old Buffalo. Taking the doctor's proffered hand, he said in rich tones that reminded Polly Rutherford of Colonel Paisly:

"Welcome, Parson; I was just out of the tobacco field, Patsy dear, and the Parson will excuse me for a free use of soap and water."

"Certainly, certainly," said the parson; then, turning to Polly Rutherford, he said:

"Come, daughter, and shake hands with Mr. Gordon. Rafe, this is Polly Rutherford Scurlock, the daughter of Amanda and Amen Scurlock."

"Oh! this is the little girl I have seen at Buffalo for several Sundays. If you are Mandy's child, I must have a kiss, for I loved your mother hard once, didn't I, Patsy?"

"I should say you did, Rafe; but I am glad Amen got Mandy and left you for me. Kiss Rafe, child, his mouth is sweet and clean, for although he makes acres of tobacco, he never chews or smokes the stuff."

Polly Rutherford put up her pretty red lips and gave Rafe Gordon a hearty kiss, which he pronounced rich and sweet and worth a guinea.

"And now," said Mrs. Gordon (for she had been stopped in the midst of her appeal to have Polly left with her over Sunday, by Rafe's coming in), "I wish to ask a special favor of you, Brother Caldwell."

"And what is it, my dear madam?" said the doctor gravely.

"Well, I am expecting my nephew, Colonel John Paisly, here this evening on his way from Chatham—he has seen Polly Rutherford's father and mother—and I want the darling girl to stay over Sunday with me and help me to entertain him and any other gentleman he may bring. Now, she is blushing and saying, 'Oh, no, I can't,' but is there any good reason why she cannot remain, doctor?"

"None that I am aware of, madam, although Polly Rutherford must decide that for herself. I should think it would be a pleasure to her to meet any one who had so very recently seen her dear parents, but

Polly seems a little 'gun shy,' as the hunters say; and a girl must conquer timidity by degrees, I suppose. What do you say, Polly dear; am I to ride home alone?"

The blush had not faded from Polly's cheeks as she gently replied:

"I had expected to return with you, Uncle Caldwell, for really I am not quite prepared for Sunday and so long an absence. The only real reason why I should go, Uncle Caldwell, is that, as it is Saturday, I need to make some changes, and therefore need clothes."

Polly really felt shy and almost afraid to see the Colonel.

"Oh, listen to the dear lass; you will just stay, my darling, and Rafe will dispatch Holiday with a line from you to Sister Caldwell, and he will soon fetch all your clean things and kickshaws, so that you can be as bewitching as you like. Ah, doctor, you don't quite understand the girls of to-day. Polly is not so gun shy as she makes out; but she does not desire to meet Colonel Paisly unless she can put the best foot foremost, you know."

"I certainly thank you, dear Mrs. Gordon, for your wish to have me stay, and I would be very ungrateful not to do so when you are willing to take so much trouble on my account. Please give me a bit of paper, ink horn and quill, and I will soon write a note to Aunt Caldwell."

"Now, that is just like Mandy's child; here is everything to your hand, darling. Rafe, call Holiday and tell him to saddle Roan quickly."

Mr. Gordon was an obedient husband, and Patsy Gordon was a reasonable wife, so they usually pulled well together, and this request was altogether to his

liking, for he had taken quite a fancy to Mandy's girl.

So his clear, strong voice was soon heard from the back porch, calling, "Holiday! Holiday!" and the answer quickly came, "Yars, marster."

"Saddle Roan, Holiday, and then come to the house for a letter you must take to Mrs. Caldwell. She will give you something to bring back, and don't let grass grow under Roan's heels."

"Yars, marster, I'll ride like the Tories was arter me, marster," and Holiday was soon dispatched upon his errand.

The dinner hour passed delightfully, and there was much pleasant talk, although the news of the capture of Governor Burke and of the battle of Cane Creek cast a shadow over all present, for all were strong adherents to the Continental cause and deplored the misfortunes that had befallen them.

"At what time do you expect Colonel Paisly, Rafe?" questioned the doctor.

"He reached Sister Ruth's last night, Doctor, and I expect them both here at any moment; we shall keep dinner for them."

"That being so, I will remain until they come; I am so anxious to hear news from the battle, for I had so many friends from about Hawfields who I feel sure were in it. We had good news from General Greene to-day——"

The conversation was here interrupted by a loud knock at the front door; and exclaiming, "There they are," Aunt Patsy, followed by Rafe Gordon, excused themselves; and leaving the Doctor and Polly Rutherford to finish their dessert, both of them proceeded to the door to welcome the newly arrived. The guests in the dining room heard several voices, and Polly Ruther-

ford's quick ear recognized the sound of two, each distinct and familiar, that sent a thrill through her heart, and a rich tide flooded her cheeks, while tears were not far away from her tender blue eyes. Fortunately, Dr. Caldwell was so absorbed in his own thoughts as not to notice the agitated girl, so she struggled to gain the mastery of her feelings, in which she was not aided by the fragments of conversation that came to her from the hall. Mrs. Gordon's voice, in loud, hearty tones, could be heard saying: "Sister Ruth, I am so glad to welcome you; and dear John, you are the same sweet old fellow you ever were. Oh, yes, Mr. Stallings, I am so glad to meet you; from Chatham, yes, grand old county is Chatham, and some of my best friends dwell there. Now, John, you cannot guess who I have here to help me entertain you gentlemen."

"How should I, Aunt Patsy? some sweet Buffalo girl, I am quite sure."

"Nay, nay; you are far away. She is a beauty, a rare beauty, and her first name is Polly."

"Aunt Patsy, Luke and I know but one Polly; there is no other. Is Miss Polly Rutherford Scurlock here?"

"She be, Colonel Paisly; do you object?"

"Nay, verily, Aunt Patsy, and our eyes are more hungry for a sight of her than are our appetites for your good dinner."

"Then you shall enjoy both; walk right into the dining room—there you will find Polly and the dinner."

Polly arose from her seat, striving hard to keep down her blushes. She received a kiss from Mrs. Paisly, and a hearty shake of the hand from Colonel Paisly, who expressed his great pleasure in meeting her again with a heartiness that assured her the pleasure was genuine.

"Really, Miss Scurlock, this is an unexpected, al-

though none the less welcome, surprise for us to meet you and dear Dr. Caldwell at Uncle Rafe's. Rest assured, Luke and I should have found our way to the parsonage had you not materialized so opportunely," and the handsome face of Colonel John Paisly was radiant with happiness as he spoke.

Luke waited meekly until Mrs. Paisly and Colonel John had greeted the Doctor and Polly Rutherford, his heart hungry for one loving glance from Polly's eyes, his hand eager for a grasp of those taper fingers that could express so much by a touch.

Polly had before her two lovers—the one, avowed and accepted; the other none the less a lover because he had not yet spoken. Shyly she glanced up into Colonel Paisly's eyes as she received his warm greeting; then, turning toward Luke, exclaimed with animation:

"I am so glad to see you, Luke; when did you see our folks? and how are all my friends? The sight of you makes me homesick, Luke."

"I am so glad to see you looking so well, Polly; and you mustn't get homesick yet, for now is no safe time for you to be on Brush Creek," said Luke with a bright smile, as he clasped Polly's hand. "Oh," he continued, "you asked me about your folks. Colonel Paisly and I left Skin Quarter the night before the battle at Cane Creek, and that is something over a week ago. Daddy and Mammy Scurlock were well, and they have Roxy Sowell and baby staying with them now. Joel Sowell, Charley Sheering, and several more Brush Creek boys are with us."

"Did you bring me a letter from mammy, Luke?" eagerly questioned Polly Rutherford.

"Indeed I did, but—there were conditions as to its

delivery that had better not be fulfilled in the presence of so many witnesses," said Luke with a saucy smile.

"Give me my letter, you naughty man, and trust my honor to make good the conditions," was Polly's answer, as, blushing, she held out her hand expectantly.

"A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. Do you think I had better deliver the letter, Colonel Paisly?—you are my superior officer," said Luke, as he watched the lovely face turned up to him so pleadingly.

"Very much depends upon the conditions, Luke; but, putting Miss Scurlock on her honor, I would advise that you deliver the letter, and, should she fail to render due compensation, you will just have to charge up the loss as our quartermasters do, to the account of 'lost and abandoned property.' "

"Most righteous judge!" exclaimed Polly Rutherford as she turned toward Colonel Paisly with a profound bow. "Now will you give me my letter, Luke?"

"Of course I shall do as the Colonel says; and I am glad to learn of so convenient an account to which I can charge up the many losses Luke Stallings has met with; so here is your letter, Polly. It is worth a lot; I carried it through the battle right next to my heart."

"The battle!—yes, the battle," exclaimed Dr. Caldwell. "While you are both dispatching dinner, do tell us about that battle, for I had so many friends in it. Was Colonel Robert Mebane there?"

"Yes, indeed he was," and Paisly became very animated. "A more intrepid spirit I never saw, Doctor, than Colonel Robert Mebane. He was almost ubiquitous in the fight—here, there, everywhere; and once, when Fanning made a desperate charge and attacked

us in the rear, there would possibly have been a rout but for Mebane. He held the men even when General Butler thought it prudent to order a retreat. You ought to have seen him, Doctor, walking down our lines with his hat full of powder, saying, 'Help yourselves, boys, and give it to them.' He was as cool (I mean collected, for it was a hot day in more ways than one) as if we had been on dress parade; and, with face all smeared with perspiration and powder, he just held our men by sheer force of will and example, in the midst of deadly peril. Brave Major John Nalls and Colonel Lutteral were both slain, and we lost other brave and true men our cause can ill afford to spare. My little company can claim the credit of temporarily disabling the notorious David Fanning; one of my men, Charley Sheering, whom Fanning had tried some time previously to slay (wounding him sorely), discovered Fanning in that desperate charge he was making, and Sheering's trusty rifle soon sent Fanning to the rear with a broken arm. The scoundrel must have worn some bullet protector, for Sheering aimed to pierce his cruel heart, but only succeeded in winging him. God was very good to us in sparing our men, although they were in the thick of the fight. A few scratches here and there, one broken arm, and Luke here was struck on the head with a spent ball. He must be a hard-headed fellow, Miss Scurlock—the ball only made a scalp wound. A soft-headed fellow would have received a mortal wound."

"Poor Mr. Stallings!" exclaimed Aunt Betsy. "We are all through dinner, so that wound must be looked after immediately. He has been in the hot sun all day, and I know he needs attention."

The chairs were moved back from the table and the

company arose, Rafe Gordon taking Dr. Caldwell and Colonel Paisly and his mother into the drawing-room, while Aunt Patsy and Polly Rutherford invited Luke to follow them out into a tidy little room adjoining the kitchen, called the "laundry," where a noggin of warm water and towels were soon in readiness.

"Now, Polly darling, you just go and read your letter or talk with the folks; you are not accustomed to this kind of work," said Aunt Patsy.

"It is high time I were, Mrs. Gordon," said Polly; "and I must see if Luke is much hurt, so I will help you."

"Well, child, if you wanted to learn, you should have been here after the battle of Guilford Court House; I dressed wounds then until an old surgeon told me I was the equal of any of them. Nevertheless, we will now begin. I will give you your first lesson. Take that soft linen rag and dip it in the warm water, then sponge off the wound until the dressing adhering to it comes away. There; that will do nicely."

"Oh, Luke!" exclaimed Polly, "what a hole it is; does it pain you much?"

"Only a dull aching and soreness, Polly; I need rest and quiet. The ride from Chatham has been a little too much and has aggravated what would otherwise have been a slight wound. Then I had not quite recovered from the gunshot wound I had in my arm; your mother has written you all about that."

"Poor Luke! you must have rest at Dr. Caldwell's a few days; and Mrs. Gordon shall teach me how to nurse you and get you strong again."

"That I will, darling," and Mrs. Gordon now proceeded to spread a new dressing of a healing salve her own deft hands had compounded, and which she had

used for the relief of many a wounded soldier. The thorough cleansing of the wound and the soothing application gave Luke great relief; and Mrs. Gordon insisted that he should go immediately to his room and rest until evening.

Poor fellow! he was worn and weary, for he had gone into the battle of Cane Creek when scarcely more than half recovered from the gunshot wounds of Walker, and had only been kept up by the excitement of the past ten days. So he gladly heeded the tender, gracious tones of Aunt Patsy Gordon as she said:

"Now, Polly Rutherford, you can go into my room or yours (they open into each other) and read your letter; I will show Mr. Stallings to his room and see that he is quite comfortable; come on, Mr. Stallings."

Luke followed the heavy footsteps of Aunt Patsy as she toiled up a flight of steps, and soon found himself in a large chamber with two luxurious beds; and near the front window was a soft lounge with a pretty, bright, woven quilt, and a light, fleecy, goose-down spread folded and lying across it. "Now, Mr. Stallings, you can either retire or rest on this lounge, and if you do not feel like coming down to supper this evening, I will bring your supper to you," urged Aunt Patsy; "for you must keep quiet; that wound is just over your brain, and you have neglected proper attention to it."

"Thanks, my dear madam; I shall be delightfully comfortable here, and hope I will be quite equal to coming down to supper," and Luke gladly stretched his weary body upon the lounge, and, although his brain was disposed to lay an embargo upon sleep, exhaustion demanded the sweet restorer, and he was soon sleeping too profoundly to indulge in dreaming.

Aunt Patsy, on returning from Luke's room, found Polly Rutherford still in her own room and engaged in reading her mother's letter.

"Why, Mandy must have written quite an epistle, Polly darling; and I do know you are precious glad to get it. It is so hard in these war times to hear from one's friends. Why, do you know, it is sometimes more than two months that I neither see nor hear from Sister Ruth, and she lives a trifle less than fifteen miles away."

"Oh, it is just dreadful, Mrs. Gordon; and mammy's letter makes me so homesick; but she says they are living in fear of their lives, and she would not have me come home yet, for it is really not safe. Several of our neighbors have been driven from their homes, and everything that would burn given to the flames. I am uneasy about daddy all the time, for some of Fanning's gang hate him and would delight to destroy everything he has, but they fear his influence in the Province."

"Cheer up, child; 'tis a dark night, indeed, that has no dawn; and when our morning breaks we shall see a bright sun shining down upon a free and happy people. Come along and let us join the Paislys and brother Caldwell."

As they entered the drawing-room, Colonel Paisly was speaking, and Polly Rutherford heard him say:

"He is a noble young man, Doctor; as true, brave, and dependable as any man in our army. If he had enjoyed the opportunities you gave me, I could not hope to excel him; and if he lives and the war continues, he will fight his way up and fill any position he wins. I only fear his reckless bravery will make him an early sacrifice to our cause. At Cane Creek he was recklessly brave, and his stalwart arm brought down several

Tory riders and rolled them in the dust before our eyes. Yes, Luke Stallings was born a soldier."

"I am glad to hear such praise of this young man, John, for somehow I have taken a great liking to him."

"How is it with you, Polly darling?" questioned Aunt Patsy, as she smiled into the flushed face and bright eyes of her young friend.

"Of course I like him, Mrs. Gordon; Luke used to fight all my battles at school, and has carried me in his arms many a time over a muddy place in the road; has caught many a June bug for me, and once brought me a whole bottleful of lightning bugs."

And Polly's face wore a quizzical smile as her eyes met the earnest gaze of Colonel Paisly. She looked very innocent, and her careless way of commending Luke would have deceived any of her auditors but the one she intended to keep from knowing too much. She little knew that Colonel Paisly already possessed the secret of her engagement to Luke.

Dr. Caldwell here put in a word of commendation, saying, "He seems to be a young man of decided character, and Polly would discover in him an entomologist of no mean pretensions, so he must be vastly out of the ordinary"; and the searching eyes of the Doctor twinkled with fun as he turned toward Polly. Then he asked, "How did you find his wound, sister Patsy?"

"I am so glad you asked, Doctor, for I was going to have you look at it before you went home; the young man has lacked proper attention, and there is need of careful treatment, I think."

"Why, Luke has made so light of his injury himself, Aunt Paisly, I thought it was a trifle," said Colonel Paisly.

"Indeed it is no trifle, John—a hole in your head as

big as a guinea egg is no trifle; and Mr. Stallings ought to have at least two weeks' absolute rest before he resumes active duty again. He was sleeping just now, and when he wakes up I want the Doctor to see him."

"Let him sleep, he needs rest; and when he wakes will be time enough for me to see him, for my old mare will then easily jog me home between sunset and starlight," said the Doctor.

The conversation then turned upon the future movements of the troop Colonel Paisly had recruited.

"Whither will you go, John? I heard only to-day good news from General Greene, and he has given the British a royal flogging at Eutaw Springs, capturing about eleven hundred prisoners. British power is about broken in South Carolina, I am thinking," were the cheery words of Dr. Caldwell.

"That is glorious news, Doctor; of course I shall report to General Greene, and shall then ask for a transfer, with my little command, to the Virginia army, if we are not likely to have very active work in South Carolina."

"That would be wise, John, for everything now points to a very decisive closing of this year's campaign in Virginia. There will be a herculean struggle there, and General Washington and General La Fayette will need every man that can be spared from plough and workshop. We should never forget, John, King's Mountain and Colonel Campbell. The Virginians stood shoulder to shoulder with the men of the Carolinas on that day, and now, when a supreme effort is to be made to end this struggle and gain our independence, let Virginian sod be as sacred as our own."

"Yes, Doctor, we be brethren, and, should I be

called to yield up my life in this cause, it matters not whether the moment of sacrifice comes in Carolina or Virginia. I trust John Paisly will be ready, and I have not a man under me who does not feel as I do."

"You have a choice company, John; and I shall follow you all with my benediction and prayers; and my faith in the justice of our cause, and in the never-failing help of God, grows stronger each day. But while we are talking the day wanes; sister Patsy, suppose you see if young Stallings be awake, for I should soon be wending homeward."

The rotund figure of Aunt Patsy disappeared from the drawing-room, followed by Polly Rutherford, her voice replying as she made haste slowly:

"I won't keep you waiting, Doctor; Stallings is doubtless awake, for he spoke of getting up in time for supper."

Dr. Caldwell soon heard Aunt Patsy calling, "Dr. Caldwell, come up to the front room, and tell Polly Rutherford to fetch those linen cloths and a noggin of warm water."

They found Luke Stallings reclining upon the couch, quite awake, but seemingly little disposed to stir about; and Dr. Caldwell soon discovered that his temperature was high, and an excited pulse gave evidence of high fever.

"Ho, young man!" exclaimed the Doctor. "You have been undertaking too much, and have taken too little care of yourself. How often has this wound been dressed on your way from Chatham?"

"Not once, Doctor; there was no one whom I could trust to handle it."

"Tut! tut! what a shame; you had better have undertaken to handle it yourself than to have let it inflame

and get you into this fix. What preparation is this I have just removed, sister Patsy?"

"Oh, that is some of the salve you so kindly showed me how to prepare, just before the battle of Guilford Court House, Doctor. It has healed many a poor fellow's wounds."

"There is nothing better known to pharmaceutics, sister Patsy; spread me another dressing, and take your gentle fingers, Polly, my daughter, and bathe that wound thoroughly with tepid soapsuds. With three surgeons, you should soon vastly improve, Master Luke Stallings; do you not think so?" and the gentle Doctor looked down into the face of his patient with a loving smile.

"Indeed I should, Doctor; and it is worth one's while to get off of his pins occasionally to enjoy such an experience, such a luxury as this;" for Polly was tenderly bathing his head.

"Well, if you like it you may luxuriate, certainly not less than two weeks; it may be longer, for you are in no shape, young man, to take the field."

"Now, isn't that just what we said, Polly Rutherford?" exclaimed Aunt Patsy. "Now, Mr. Luke Stallings, just consider yourself our prisoner, and we will not release you until our good Doctor says the word."

"Is Polly Rutherford to be warden?" questioned the Doctor with a merry twinkle in his eye. "If so," he added, "perhaps Master Luke will remain a prisoner."

"In one sense, I have always been Polly Rutherford's prisoner, Doctor; but Luke Stallings must not enjoy even the luxury of this captivity when his country needs him. So you must get me healed as quickly as surgery can do it, although the healing takes me away from sweet bondage."

At this plain avowal Polly Rutherford's soft cheeks grew crimson, her bright eyes flashed, and she turned in an abashed way from the interested gaze of the Doctor and Aunt Patsy, as she said a little impatiently:

"Oh, hush, Luke! If you talk that way, I shall use all my skill to get your head straight as speedily as possible; you are too publicly pronounced in your sentiments, for my comfort."

A hearty laugh from the doctor, in which he was joined by Aunt Patsy, but added to Polly Rutherford's confusion; and then, concluding that she had performed her part in the surgery for this occasion, she hastily withdrew.

"There, now!" exclaimed the Doctor, "we have played the mischief, sister Patsy; the girl seems quite touchy, Master Luke."

"It is strange behavior for Polly Rutherford, Doctor, and I do not altogether understand it. She seemed to be mortified at the idea that I should express my true sentiments toward her in the presence of her Guilford friends, when we have been engaged ever since before she left Chatham. She may be sure I shall not offend her in like manner again."

"Do nothing rashly, Master Luke; girls have their ideas as to when and where men should make known such secrets; and we must respect even what may seem to us a prudish idea."

"I am a very plain man, Doctor; had no chances, just grew up so; but there is no policy about me, and I can no more help showing that I love Polly Rutherford than I could turn a lot of sunbeams into a snowball. If she don't like that, it just shows that she does not love in the same way that I do, and there's an end of it. I doubt not that Polly has somewhat changed her

mind, and heart, too, for that matter, since she came to Guilford."

"That does not follow, Master Luke; I am very sure no young man around Buffalo has made any impression upon Polly. You must rest here with sister Patsy a few days, and then come over and finish out your visit at the parsonage; by that time I think Polly will have forgiven you for having told her secret in your matter-of-fact way. Now, you are all comfortable for the night, having taken your bolus; rest quietly and don't worry; good night;" and the dear Doctor pressed Luke's hand, and, followed by Aunt Patsy, left the room.

On reaching the drawing-room, the Doctor and Aunt Patsy found Polly Rutherford all animation, and engaged in a lively discussion with Colonel Paisly upon constancy—the virtue lacking or abounding in woman. The Colonel professed to have just a little faith in woman's constancy in the abstract, but averred that woman *en masse* could not be trusted to cling to one love through thick and thin, but, like wandering stars, they were ever seeking a new orbit.

"Fie! fie! Colonel Paisly," exclaimed Polly; "that I should ever find so hopeless a heretic in so seemingly proper a gentleman. Women are more faithful than men, sir; and those wandering stars of which you speak are generally of the masculine gender; is that not so, Doctor Caldwell?"

"Yes, if you say so, Polly; why, John Paisly, I wouldn't give the love of my Rebecca for me in exchange for the crown of King George. Wish I had time to follow out the argument; you, sister Patsy, and Rafe must help Polly out. Good night to all;" and giving Polly a loving kiss and a pat on each rosy cheek, the Doctor was soon jogging homeward.

CHAPTER XV

UNDER WHICH KING?

Every woman clothes in the purple of royalty her ideal of manhood, and many seek in vain for an ideal who shall worthily wear these ready-made garments. To many women it is granted to realize much of what they hoped for, and the bridegroom becomes to them a veritable king worthy of their love and loyalty. To others, the man whom their fancy has clothed in the purple, and to whom they gave their all of love and loyalty, turns out but a piece of glazed pottery that, tumbling from the lofty pedestal upon which maidenly devotion has placed it, is shattered and scattered, dust to dust. There are times, also, in the life of every maiden, when more than one king strives to bear away the jewel of her undivided affection, and she sadly lacks, for the time, the intuitive power to decide under the standard of which king she shall unfurl the pure white banner of her love.

Was Polly Rutherford Scurlock, the sunny maiden who had never felt a real heart sorrow, just entering into (through no seeking of her own) the shadow of a heart trial? Was she to contend with doubts, fears, and to lay herself under the grave charge of disloyalty? Other maidens have passed along that way, and Polly, although bright and pure as gold, was human, and must fain meet with thorns even among the roses

of life. We can only follow and tell the story as it came about.

Luke, as the sun sank low and the shadows of the trees seen from his windows grew long, lay upon his bed with aching head and throbbing heart, for Polly Rutherford had sore wounded his sensitive heart, and he began to think it had been well if the spent ball had come with more force and ended it all. His eyes were dim with a briny mist, and his lips murmured a low soliloquy.

"Oh, Polly, my darling, you have filled my heart; you are the only bright hope in my poor life. Now I am to lose you, and I cannot live and bear it. I know Colonel Paisly is the soul of honor and will not woo you with his lips now; but his eyes tell you of his unspoken love, and I am in the way of your happiness and of his. Oh, Father, give me strength to meet this blow, and, if it be Thy will, let the next battle claim me as a sacrifice for my country and a trophy of redeeming grace."

"Poor fellow! no one to keep you company, so you are talking to yourself."

It was the cheery voice of Aunt Patsy, who had toiled up the flight of stairs to look after her "poor wounded soldier," as she called Luke, and to bring him his supper. "I should have been up before, Mr. Stallings, but hoped you were sleeping; how do you feel?"

"Much depressed, Mrs. Gordon; I have a queer sensation about my head, my nerves are in a quiver, and it is such a hopeless kind of combination, I am not sure that my brain is not seriously affected."

"Mr. Stallings, you should have told Dr. Caldwell about that goneness."

"He knew of my nervous state, madam, and I think there is an opiate in that bolus I have taken; when I get fully under its influence I shall sleep. Oh, to sleep! Mrs. Gordon, 'tis the sweetest boon given to man when in trouble; he can then forget."

"Poor, dear man! you are grieving over what Polly Rutherford said; don't let the foolish words of a girl rob you of the sleep you must have, and don't talk about it. I will bring you a hop pillow, and soon you will be in dreamland, and can have respite from this world's troubles for a while; but now eat your supper."

Mrs. Gordon soon returned with the pillow, and adjusting it under Luke's head, she sat by him, holding his hand and gently stroking it with her own soft palm, until he passed off into a quiet, restful sleep.

In the drawing-room and at the supper table, the discussion between Colonel Paisly and Polly Rutherford had continued; the Colonel had never been more winning or entertaining, while Polly Rutherford displayed flashes of wit, humor, and argumentative ability that proved an astonishment to the Colonel; and their bright sallies were a source of mirthful entertainment to all present. Only once did Aunt Patsy remonstrate, as a witty remark of Polly's caused rather loud and merry laughter.

"Not so loud, good friends; poor Mr. Stallings has just been suffering with a pain in his head, and I had no end of trouble to get him to sleep; please don't waken him."

"Thank you, Aunt Patsy, for telling us," said the Colonel. "Poor Luke! I am so sorry that wound of his was so neglected."

"You may well be, John; it's too near his brain not

to be serious. I feared to-night he was going to be delirious"; and Aunt Patsy gave Polly Rutherford an earnest look, for she wished to see the effect of her words.

Polly found that the Colonel's eyes were also gazing at her; and she felt the warm flow of blood as it richly colored her cheeks, and her eyes grew dim, refusing even a glance at either Aunt Patsy or the Colonel. At last she said softly:

"Do you think Luke is dangerously hurt, Mrs. Gordon?"

"The hurt is not dangerous in itself, Polly, but the neglect has brought about inflammation, and Mr. Stallings needs tender handling, child, and should in no way be excited. You will have to leave him behind you, John, until he is better, or I would not like to answer for consequences. I am going to keep him here a few days, and then Dr. Caldwell wishes him to come over to the parsonage and stay until he is quite well."

'The leave will be granted with great pleasure, Aunt Patsy. I value Luke so highly that nothing I can do for his restoration shall be lacking; I shall miss him sorely, but he must stay where I know he will have tender and watchful care"; and Colonel Paisly gave Polly Rutherford a smile and a look that she afterwards understood.

One by one the drawing-room lost its tenants, until Polly Rutherford found herself alone with Colonel John Paisly, and listening to him as he eloquently pictured to her his ideal of true love, and the sacrifices he would be willing to make for one who had taken possession of his heart and should henceforth share his life.

"Not that I claim to be better than my fellows, Miss Polly Rutherford, either by nature or by practice; but

I think there is just a trifle less selfishness in me than in the average man. Men are, as a class, more selfish than women; they love power, wealth, ease, human comfort; and wish to procure all these with as little trouble and toil as possible. While I, too, love these things, there is something, there is someone somewhere I could love more than they all, should I ever find a woman whose heart was free, and who filled every fibre of my being with the magic of that undefinable something people call 'love.' I believe there is no definition of that word 'love' that gives one an exact idea of what it means, of what it really is. Love is an experience differing in each individual case, and interpreting itself only to those who become subject to its subtle power. Love sometimes comes like the tiny beams of light at early dawn—growing, expanding, until they fill the heavens and earth with a flood of glory. Love sometimes comes like the soft blowing of the south wind, bearing the fragrance of tropical flowers and filling the hearts of men and women with much of its own softness and sweetness. Love sometimes comes like a resistless tidal wave, and sweeping away all barriers, asserts control over two lives even when the love it brings is tinged with unfaithfulness somewhere, and an uneasy conscience which will not down at the bidding of its deluded victims."

"You speak so eloquently, Colonel Paisly, upon this subject, surely you have realized a happy experience and can tell me more of this subtle thing than I should ever dream of knowing," said Polly, as she looked into the Colonel's bright face with an innocent smile.

"Thus far I am a theorist only, Miss Polly, and have never paid such homage as a whole-hearted surrender to any woman. That I could do so I am quite

sure, were the occasion fully ripe, and I know enough of my own heart to be able to say even in advance how soft a Benedict I could become, were my love not only welcomed but reciprocated."

"Nothing venture, nothing win. Colonel, if you have such an exuberant faith in this subtle thing called 'love,' why not make a venture?"

"My honor will not let me, Miss Polly; these are not times when men may win the love of women and wed at pleasure, for every true man in this crisis belongs first to his country. Then, I will further explain my position by an incident. Suppose you had a dear friend whom you suspected to be plighted to a fair woman whom up to a certain period in life you had never met. Suppose you should finally meet the young woman in an unexpected way, and after many delightful interviews you should make two discoveries: first, that she was really the betrothed of another; and last, but not least, that she was stealing away your heart. Now, Miss Polly, what is a man's duty in such a case?"

"I am not a man, Colonel," said Polly mischievously.

"But, my dear girl, you should know how an honorable man should act?"

"Well, I suppose he should go away and let the pair of loving hearts be, even if there might have been a possibility of a change in his favor; but there are not many men that would do that, Colonel."

"And for that the women are to blame, Miss Polly; were I a woman and pledged to a man in all ways worthy, no other suppliant lover should dare approach so sacred a thing as my plighted heart. I might love ever so tenderly and not be able to still my heart as I draw near to the beloved, but there are circumstances that would still my tongue, and I had rather lose a love

I should value above rubies, than win it at the cost of broken faith."

Polly Rutherford's eyes drooped, and her cheeks grew warm, for she felt a blush coming; still, she was tempted to hear the Colonel further on the subject of love, for no one had ever so interested her before in a general way.

"So you think no woman should ever change her mind, Colonel?" she asked naïvely.

"Every woman should know her own mind, and, above all, know her own heart, my dear girl. This loving and plighting is so serious that vows should never be lightly spoken, and rarely rudely broken. The woman who once pledges to me her heart, her life, I shall expect to redeem that pledge at the altar; and I should be slow to offer homage to any woman who had broken faith with a worthy man."

"Women, Colonel, are creatures of environment; they live in their little world, and many rarely leave the country neighborhood in which they were reared. They have often no choice but to be the choice of the best man they have ever seen. That choice is often wise and good, and brings much happiness into what may else have been a solitary life of celibacy. Do not censure women too severely who may for wise reasons sometimes recall a pledge that in a moment of grateful friendly feeling they have made to a worthy young man. I am pleading for my sex in general, Colonel; and remember, we are discussing this whole subject philosophically—if this subtle thing can be handled that way."

"Your sex have an able advocate, Miss Polly; and you have indeed pictured a strong case. I do not say a girl should never change her mind, even when she

has made an ill-considered pledge; but I advise all women to make haste slowly in matters pertaining to love and marriage. Remember, the good book saith, 'Better it is that thou shouldst not vow, than that thou shouldst vow and not pay.' As to discussing love philosophically, there is, to my mind, less of philosophy in an average love match than in almost anything else human. 'Falling in love' about expresses it, and when I see a young man of low instincts trying to win some high, pure woman, I am convinced that he, at least, does not understand the law of gravitation, and is striving to fall upwards. There should be an eternal fitness in mutual love, Miss Polly."

"You make love a fearsome thing, Colonel Paisly; I have never before heard anyone speak of it in so gruesome a style. Women folk are like game—the men are the archers, so I have been thinking. But be love so solemn, 'tis a dangerous thing to be struck by the shaft of your kind of Cupid."

And Polly Rutherford laughed in her soft, merry way, although there was a shadow of demureness about her pretty mouth.

"Have you found it so, Miss Polly?" and John Paisly sought to gaze straight into the bright eyes that refused to be questioned.

"This is not a personal discussion, Colonel," she answered; "we, at least, are speaking philosophically."

"I am sure you asked my experience in such affairs, Miss Polly, and true comradery should reciprocate. Should you have no experience, then I should be the loser; but, philosophy or no philosophy, pray tell me—have you found love a solemn and gruesome thing?"

"Why should you presume that I have found love in a personal way at all, Colonel?"

"I might say I have none other than a woman's reason—'I think it so because I think it so'—but that would not be the exact truth. Shall I tell you I know you have such an experience?"

"Colonel Paisly, how can you say you know?"

"For the reason that one who rejoices in a reciprocated love admitted as much to me"; and John Paisly watched eagerly the effect of his words upon Polly Rutherford.

Her face flushed and her bright blue eyes sought shelter beneath their long, dark lashes; her delicate fingers were interlaced and moved in a nervous way; while a temporary silence gave evidence that her feelings had mastered her voice. The Colonel remained silent, too, and was rewarded at last by hearing a soft, earnest voice saying:

"All men are alike, Colonel—they seem so enlifted by the slightest admission of a girl that she cares for what they offer that they proclaim it from the housetops, and thus cause the unfortunate woman no end of teasing and worry. Such an admission from a woman, as that she loves, should be sacred, Colonel Paisly."

"I think so, too, dear Miss Polly; but you must not think that my friend Luke has blazoned forth to the world his good fortune; nay, nay. I cannot tell you exactly how it came about, for a very good reason personal to myself; but Luke told me in confidence that he was happy in your love; and that confidence has not, and will not, be betrayed. You should not find this love of Luke Stallings' a solemn and a gruesome thing. You have my best wishes, and Luke is all worthy; but the hour is now late and I must say good night, and try not to disturb the slumber of Luke."

And with a cordial clasp of Polly's hand, Colonel Paisly left the drawing-room.

It was after midnight when Polly Rutherford took the large brass candlestick from the drawing-room table, containing the candle that should afford her light for disrobing, and sought the solitude of her chamber. Her sleep was fitful, and her dreams were strangely mixed—the lover that gained her favor was sometimes Luke; and then his face would fade away and the bright, speaking eyes of Colonel John Paisly seemed to be reading her thoughts and discovering a strange state of things in her heart. Under which king goes the white flag of the maiden?

CHAPTER XVI

CONVALESCENCE OF LUKE STALLINGS

Sunday morning dawned beautifully, and a light frostwork was spread like a gossamer quilt over field and forest. The sparkle as the sun's rays gilded the landscape was like the shining of myriads of tiny diamonds, and the dogwoods, maples, and hickorys gave the woods a glow of color that no artist could have faithfully copied. As Luke opened his eyes upon this lovely scene he exclaimed in a whisper, for fear of waking his slumbering companion: "'Manifold are Thy works, O God; in wisdom hast Thou made them all.' This beautiful morning comes to brighten me bodily and to cheer my poor heart; thank God for all His mercies."

"What are you whispering about, Luke?" questioned Colonel Paisly in a drowsy tone.

"I am thanking God, Colonel, for the light of this beautiful morning, for another holy Sabbath of rest, and that my head feels less sore and a little less muddled than it did on yesterday."

"'Tis a lovely morning, sure enough; a day to be thankful for, and I am so glad you feel better," said the Colonel as, leaning on his elbow in bed, he gazed out upon this early autumn Sabbath morn.

"I have decided, Luke, to leave you behind and let you convalesce while the troop journeys to South Caro-

lina. I am going to ask for a transfer of our command to the cavalry division of the Virginia army, and in that event we could pass by here on our way to join the Virginia forces. By that time, I think your cracked head will have mended, between Dr. Caldwell, Aunt Patsy, and Miss Polly Rutherford."

"I don't know that it is best for my cracked head to mend, Colonel, and sometimes I wish—that is if it's right to wish it—that the spent ball had brought force enough to finish its work."

"My dear friend, you must not talk that way; few young men have as much to live for as you have. The love of such a woman as Polly Rutherford Scurlock is worth the best abilities of any man in shielding and cherishing her."

"You know what I told you when we were at Daddy Scurlock's, Colonel? I am of the same mind still. I shall release Polly Rutherford from all pledges, and when this war is over she shall be free to choose between us. When I am strong enough to see and talk with her I shall set her free."

"Perhaps Miss Polly does not desire to be free, Luke. You should not pain her by seeming to doubt her loyalty."

"She should not wound me, Colonel, by being so touchy about others knowing that I love and have some claim on her. Henceforth I shall treat Polly only as a dear friend for whom I would do or dare anything, but she shall never have another opportunity to wound me in the presence of comparative strangers."

Luke then related to the Colonel what had passed between them the evening before in the presence of Dr. Caldwell and Aunt Patsy.

"I am sorry, so sorry, Luke; but you must remem-

ber Miss Polly Rutherford is but a young, inexperienced girl, unused to being engaged, and she has seen almost nothing of you since you were engaged. Be patient, my dear fellow, and do not lose heart; I shall never, no never, stand between you and Polly, Luke, so do nothing rash. Do you feel equal to rising this forenoon?"

"No, Colonel, I am weaker than I thought and shall try absolute bodily rest to-day. I am sorry, too, for I should have enjoyed hearing Dr. Caldwell preach today."

"It is both a privilege and a luxury, Luke, and I must hasten to dress, for Uncle Rafe and Aunt Patsy always have Sunday breakfast at seven o'clock."

The ever faithful Holiday had despatched his errand on the evening before, and Polly Rutherford had received a package tied up by the skillful hands of Aunt Rachael Caldwell, containing a silk gown Mammy Mandy had purchased for her in Pittsboro a while before she left Chatham; and along with it was a filmy lace collar and wristlets that seemed a fitting garniture to the sheeny blue and gold silk. There were also bright ribbons at the neck, and around the waist a girdle in blue and gold, so when Polly appeared at breakfast all ready for church-going, except her hat and riding habit, her cheeks blooming from a brisk turn among the autumn flowers in the garden, her eyes shining like sapphires, she was a vision of loveliness it would have been hard to match in the whole Province.

"Bravo, but you are a winsome lass, Polly!" exclaimed Uncle Rafe, as Polly entered the dining-room.

"Too pretty; she's dangerous," added Aunt Patsy, as she gave her a kiss.

"I can add nothing," exclaimed the Colonel, while

Mrs. Ruth Paisly also greeted Polly with a loving smile and a kiss.

"Cease your flatteries, kind friends; people can't help their looks!" exclaimed Polly. "You should all remember 'tis Sabbath morning and you should put aside all idle talk. How is Luke this morning, Colonel?"

"He seems brighter, Miss Polly, and had a fair night. He was awake before the chickens came off the roost, but says his head is clear from the dull aching of yesterday. He is unable to rise, and is bemoaning the loss of Dr. Caldwell's sermon. He says he is the grandest preacher he ever heard in his life, and wonders how he ever got enough Gospel out of Old Parson Rowe's sermons to learn the road to Heaven."

"Did you meet Old Parson Rowe while you were in Chatham, Colonel?" asked Polly.

"No, Miss Polly, and hearing that he was a friend of Colonel Fanning's and of Jack Rains, I had no desire to make his acquaintance. I fell in love with your dear father and mother, though, and you should be very grateful for such parents and such a sweet home as Skin Quarter, Miss Polly. Aunt Mandy is just splendid, and Daddy Scurlock, had he been a Roman, would have been a Patrician indeed."

"My home and my beloved parents are blessings I can never feel too grateful to God for, Colonel. Mother is the bravest and most patriotic woman I ever saw, and dear old Daddy is so true, so tender. I could weep if the weeping would give me a glimpse of them."

"I spoke of Skin Quarter, Miss Polly. 'Tis a singular name for your home. How did it ever originate?"

"Oh; there is an old story about the origin of that name; it reaches back to the early settlers of Chatham. There was an old man named Zachary Skin, a very

thrifty man who came over from England early in this century, and accumulated many guineas by trading with the Indians and investing his earnings in land. He located large holdings on Brush Creek, and divided his lands into smaller plantations, having no trouble to find tenants as he provided them with comfortable cabins, and allowed a reduction on the rent as compensation for clearing the timber and opening fields. Just where our house now stands, Zachary Skin built the first house ever erected on that plantation. He owned a number of slaves, and the richest bottom lands on Daddy's place were cleared by these slaves under the eyes of their old master; and it is said that there was no love lost between master and slaves.

"Tradition saith that Zachary Skin was found one morning in one of his fields, stone dead, at the root of a giant pine. His horse, wild with excitement, was careering about the field. While foul play was suspected, no proof could be obtained, and the old man now rests in our burying ground. The place during his life time was called 'Skin's Quarter,' and when Daddy bought the plantation, dropping the 'S', the place has since been known as Skin Quarter."

"That is an interesting story, Miss Polly, and the old place has quite a history."

"Oh, Daddy could tell you many stories about old Zachary Skin, Colonel, for it was always thought that he ran a slave vessel between Carolina and the gold coast, and the name of Skin has never been honored in Chatham. I hope you will visit Chatham in peaceful days and meet some of our real good people, Colonel."

"You may be sure I shall do so, Miss Polly, if life

and health are spared; I should grieve to think I should never see my Chatham friends again."

"I am just waiting for peace to be declared, Polly dear, and, large as I am, Rafe must buy a vehicle large enough to carry me, and drive me over to Chatham. I shall never rest until I see you and Mandy in your own home, child."

"The latch string is always outside, Mrs. Gordon," said Polly.

"I should only be too glad to celebrate peace in that way, Patsy dear," said Rafe Gordon, "and if you think peace is not far off, I will ride over to Salem and get my Moravian friends to put up a rig for you this fall. By the way, are you going to church this morning, Patsy?"

"No, Rafe, Mr. Stallings must not be left alone in the house; you must all go, and I will stay and look after him."

So breakfast, a long and social meal, was ended, and an early start was made to Buffalo meeting house. Polly was soon mounted on her own beautiful mare, Dapple, that had been sent over from Dr. Caldwell's for her, and Colonel Paisly, mounted upon his splendid black charger, was her escort.

The churchgoers having left, Aunt Patsy prepared a dainty breakfast for Luke, a steaming pot of yopon, a rich and foaming pitcher of milk, hot rolls and cakes, a broiled partridge, and other accessories that would have sufficed for the appetites of at least two well men, but everything about the serving was dainty and appetizing.

Calling Holiday she said, "Have you got on your Sunday's best, boy?"

"Yars, Marm, all de bes' I got, Marm."

"Then take this waiter up to Mr. Stallings' room. Have you carried up fresh water and looked well after the comfort of the gentleman, Holiday?"

"Yars, Marm, two hour ago, and he say he got ebery-thing he want."

"Go on then, and stay and wait on Mr. Stallings while he takes his breakfast."

With a duck of his black wooly head, Holiday vanished, and was soon tipping quietly into the large front room with the generous breakfast, and had arranged it on a small table beside the resting soldier before he was thoroughly awake or aware of his coming. Looking down into the half-closed eyes of Luke, Holiday called gently, "Mars Stallings; Mars Stallings; hears your breakfast, Sar. Drink dis tea whiles 'tis hot, Sar; ole Miss' comin' up presently."

"What have you there, Holiday?"

"Yo' breakfus', Sar, nice an' hot."

"Everybody had breakfast?"

"Yars, Sar. Dey's all gone to church 'ceptin' ole Miss'."

"A beautiful Sunday, Holiday; 'tis too bad for me to be lying up here when I should have enjoyed going to church so much."

"Mars John, he sartin enjoyed goin', Sar, and 'twas a lobely sight; he on he fine black hoss, wid skin lak silk, an' Miss Polly, she ridin' her beautiful mar' whar she call Dapple. I jess knows when dey gets to Buffalo de folks will jes' open ranks an' let 'em right in; I cert'n'y is sorry you couldn't go, Mars Stallings."

"So Miss Polly and Colonel Paisly looked very happy, did they, Holiday?"

"Happy! de Lawd a mussy, Mars Stallings, dere faces was jest as bright as de shinin' sun on dat dog-

wood yonder, and I hear 'em larfin' clear untwell you gets to de turn of de big road, a soft, pleasant kinder larf."

"So you think the Colonel likes Miss Polly very much, do you, Holiday?"

"Dat's de least near de truth you could say it, Mars Stallings. I oberhear de Colonel tell he mar one day when Miss Polly fust come, dat Miss Polly Rutherford Scurlock was de onliest lady he eber see dat his heart jes' natchully went out to de fust time he eber seen her."

"Do you think Miss Polly Rutherford likes the Colonel, Holiday?"

"Heah; heah, Mars Stallings, now you axed me somethin' sho-nuff. 'Cose she lak him, Sar, but how much she lak him dat's de question dat comboberates me. If de Colonel want dat lady, Sar, he better be spry, 'caze you don't see her kind ebery day; no, Sar, and she won't go a-beggin' for a pardner. All dese men 'round Buffalo, young and old, has been wearin' out Mars Caldwell's hoss-rack, an' dey tells me she kicks 'em wusser dan a two-year-ole filly."

The drolleries of Holiday served to amuse Luke, and when Aunt Patsy entered the room a little later, she found him convulsed with laughter and more cheerful in spirit than she had yet seen him.

"Good morning, Mr. Stallings. I rejoice to see you so merry," was Aunt Patsy's salutation. "Have you eaten that breakfast?" she then questioned.

"Now, Mrs. Gordon, you certainly did not expect me to get away with rations enough for three men. I have been eating and laughing by turns, for Holiday has been quite entertaining, and I feel decidedly brighter than I did last evening."

"Holiday is a great gabbler, and I fear has worried you. You can take those things down now, Holiday, and clear up the dining-room."

"Yars, Marm, but I ain't talk no worrysome talk to Mars Stallings; I jes' 'scribin' things to him, Marm."

"Well, you go and scrub out the dining-room, and I will 'scribe anything Mr. Stallings wishes 'scribed."

"Yars, Marm"; and with a broad grin and a funny roll of the whites of his eyes toward Luke, which again convulsed him, Holiday made his exit.

"That African is utterly irrepressible, Mr. Stallings, and I sometimes fear we spoil him, but he is so good-natured, humble and droll. I never feel out of spirits when Holiday is about. That is one reason I took him into the house; and then he is an orphan. His father was taken to Georgia when Holiday was a little black atom, and his mother died years ago; he has been raised about the house."

"Holiday is a character, Mrs. Gordon; he has been telling me about the start to 'chutch,' as he called it, and how happy Polly Rutherford and the Colonel looked; and how much he thought the Colonel loved Miss Polly. I tell you, Madam, Holiday is no fool, and he knows about as well what is going on about him as the next one."

"Polly did look lovely this morning, Mr. Stallings. You ought to have seen her. No one could help loving the child; she is just bewitching, and seems so innocent and unaware of her attractions. You are a very fortunate man, indeed you are, Mr. Stallings, in having won so early her love."

"I am a very unfortunate man, Madam, as events are proving; I have been engaged in this war about a year, and have been wounded twice. I thought I had won

the heart of the sweetest woman in the world, but there is an old Proverb which says, 'Mischiefs come by the pound, and go away by the ounce.' Other folk have found my lassie to be winsome, and I shall lose her; there is nothing left then but to lose my life for my country. I trust I am willing to make the sacrifice."

"Oh, Mr. Stallings; where is your merry humor? I shall have to send for Holiday again. Surely you do not think that Polly Rutherford has so soon repented her vows, and desires a wider range of conquest?"

"That is just it exactly, Mrs. Gordon. Polly has seen but little of this world of ours, and, up to the time of her visit to Dr. Caldwell's, knew but few men who were worthy of her acquaintance. Is it at all strange that she should be pleased with even this little glimpse into another world? I shall free her from her promise, Mrs. Gordon, and let her heart revel in its power over men. To this end, many women were created, judging from what I now see."

"You must not grow cynical, Mr. Stallings, and pray do nothing in haste that shall wound that young girl's heart. Polly is gay and enjoys life, but I feel sure she is noble and true, and would do nothing, knowingly, that would seem like disloyalty to you."

"I have read the handwriting on the wall, Mrs. Gordon; I have 'been weighed in the balance and found wanting.' 'God hath numbered my kingdom, and finished it.' Polly shall never rest under a stigma of disloyalty to me, for I shall release her."

"You are determined on that? Do you know whether John Paisly divines your intention?"

"He knows it, Madam, and he endeavored to dissuade me. I had determined on this course before I

left Chatham. Since I have seen the Colonel and Polly together, I am only the more determined."

"Well, the skein of life has some hard knots, Mr. Stallings; I truly hope you may find Polly truer than you think, for as much as I would joy to see her the wife of John Paisly, I would not have it so at the expense of her loyalty to you. Cheer up; you are a brave and honest man, and deserve well at the hands of Polly Rutherford."

"Thank you kindly, Madam. I shall brace up and strive to bear life's ills like a Christian man should. I will rise from this bed this afternoon, and my face shall wear a smile even though my heart were breaking. Men know not what they can bear until the fires of the crucible touch them."

"Do not undertake to get up, Mr. Stallings, unless you feel quite equal to it. I will now look at your wound and see how much improvement there is"; and going to the head of the stairs, Mrs. Gordon called out, "Holiday!"

"Yars, Marm," came the answer.

"Bring me a noggin of warm water and those linen cloths in the laundry, Holiday."

"Yars, Marm, comin'." And the young African soon entered the room, bringing all that Mrs. Gordon required.

Mrs. Gordon carefully unbound Luke's head and gently removed the dressing, displaying to Holiday's astonished gaze quite a sizeable hole in a state of healthy granulation.

"De Lawd a mussy, Mars Stallings, dem folks mose kill you. Never see nothing like dat 'ceptin' dem folks whar Miss Patsy had here arter de battle. Dey was abused up scand'lous, dey was."

"This is the fate of war, Holiday; you ought to be glad you are a nigger, and don't have to fight."

"Dat I is, Sar. Ain't nobody I gwyin ter fight fer, 'ceptin' 'twas Mars Rafe er Miss Patsy."

"Would you fight for me, Holiday?" asked Aunt Patsy, with a comical smile.

"Dat I would, Marm; fight wusser dan a wile-cat, and dey is de fightin'est things in de woods."

"Well, I hope you will never have cause to defend me, Holiday, but I believe you would do it." Then turning toward Luke, Aunt Patsy, smiling one of those sweet smiles that seemed like a ray of sunlight, said, "The wound is so much better, Mr. Stallings; the inflammation is going away fast, and the danger to your brain is all passed. I am so thankful. Now I will bind it up with a fresh dressing, then you must have perfect quiet and take another nap before the people come from church. Perhaps we will let you come down to supper."

CHAPTER XVII

DEEDS ARE FRUITS, WORDS ARE BUT LEAVES

There had been two services at old Buffalo church, and the day was one long remembered by the neighbors who had gathered for miles around to hear the wise and eloquent words of Dr. David Caldwell.

The morning sermon was from a text that arrested the attention of every hearer, as the good doctor, with impressive manner, announced it. Proverbs, 18th chapter, 21st verse: "Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof." The tongue, its duties, its power over life and death; the vehicle of utterance for the brain; the mouthpiece of the heart, was described as the Colonel and Polly Rutherford had never heard it before. This little member was shown to be like the little helm that moves and controls the mighty ship; like the little spider weaves, so the tongue weaves the web of life; like the magnetic needle that unerringly points to the pole, so does the tongue point to the inward and secret emotions of heart and brain.

As the audience had pictured before them the power of the tongue in shaping their destinies, in bringing joy, happiness and life, or sorrow, shame and death, there were many hearts that trembled for words of bitterness and slander already uttered; there were many silent prayers lifted to the All Seeing One for forgive-

there was a thing the matter with him. The Continental Army has no braver, truer soldier than Luke Stallings."

"I believe you, John. Come, let us quicken up, for I can only stop by a little while."

Soon the whole party reached the Gordon home, Mrs. Paisly's vehicle having gone ahead of them, and were ushered into the drawing-room where they found Aunt Patsy entertaining Luke, who was reclining on a comfortable lounge and looking decidedly brighter and better.

"Well, how is my patient?" inquired the doctor, as he walked over and took a seat by Luke, grasping and holding his hand as he spoke.

"I am much better, Dr. Caldwell; my head is getting all right, and my appetite is not only carnivorous, but omnivorous," replied Luke with a quiet smile on his fine face.

"Bravo! You are worth a dozen Tories any day; I have great hopes of you. So there is nothing for me to do, Sister Patsy, and while this company is very agreeable, we will have worship and I will then go home to Rachel."

The prayers of David Caldwell were heart-talks with God, and he lifted every one around that family altar up, up, into the very presence of the King Eternal, Immortal, Invisible, and had such a tender way of telling the Father your every want, your every sorrow, your joys and thanksgivings, that this altar service was as the voice of one heart, that all present felt the uplift, and arose from the place of prayer feeling nearer to each other, nearer to the great searcher and keeper of hearts.

"So you go to General Greene in the morning, do you, John?" asked the doctor as he was taking leave.

"Yes, Doctor; I have ordered my troop to pass here at seven in the morning, and we will be on the march before eight. I am going to leave Luke under your skillful care until we pass this way en route to Virginia."

"That is well. Luke has more nerve and will power at this time than he has strength, and his system has been so depleted he needs building up. I shall have you rosy and strong, young man, in a short time if you only obey my orders."

"I don't feel strong enough to resist them even if I felt so disposed, Doctor, and I am so tired of playing the invalid I promise to be a good boy if that will make me able to fight my enemies soon."

"Luke does not think of anything but the next battle, Doctor," said Paisly, "and he is a dangerous man to follow in a charge. That old sorrel top he rides is always prepared against the day of battle, and seems to delight in the roar of guns and the clash of steel quite as much as Luke does."

"War is one of the scourges of our race, my young friends, and 'tis sent to punish man for his sins of hate and greed and lust of power. We, as a people, are not without sin, but I believe that in defending our homes and in claiming the right to govern ourselves, we are doing right. Hence, the cause of my people is my cause, and I can earnestly pray to God for his blessing upon every arm uplifted for our defence. May God bless you and your brave boys, John Paisly, and bring you back to us again in peace." With an earnest shake of the hand with all, and a good-night kiss to Polly, the doctor passed out of the cheery home of Rafe Gordon and was soon trotting homeward, singing as he rode along beneath the twinkling stars,

"Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound," to a quaint and plaintive air that has lived in the hearts of our people for more than a hundred and fifty years.

The evening meal passed quickly at the Gordons', and Mrs. Paisly and the Colonel remained in the dining-room with Rafe and Aunt Patsy for a quiet talk about home matters. As the Colonel was going a long distance from home he was anxious that Uncle Rafe should understand the condition of his own and his mother's affairs, so that he could advise and aid her in every way possible, they found much to talk over. Thus was Polly Rutherford left to entertain Luke in the drawing-room, and they were now alone together for the first time in months. Polly felt a little embarrassed, for she remembered her hasty words on Saturday evening, and expected that Luke would lose no time in resenting them. Instead, Luke's face wore a sweet smile as he took his seat near Polly, and, without reference to the unpleasant words she had spoken, he asked gently, "Have you enjoyed this holy day, dear Polly? and do tell me about Dr. Caldwell's sermons."

Polly glanced shyly at Luke as she answered, "It has been a delightful Sabbath, and I have enjoyed its restful hours so much; but Uncle Caldwell preached his whole morning sermon to me, Luke, every bit of it."

"How so, Polly dear?"

"His text was, 'Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.' Oh, he showed me so plainly how mean my tongue could be, what a wonderful power it had over life and death, and how bitter, indeed, was the fruit of an evil tongue. He told us that many folks were as beautiful outwardly as the apples of Sodom, and just as bitter inwardly when you get a taste of them.

When he said this he looked straight at me, and, Luke, I never felt as mean in or out of church in my life, for I was sure he meant to rebuke me for the way in which I talked to you on Saturday evening," and Polly's voice trembled as she spoke.

Luke was now holding Polly's hand between both his broad sun-burnt honest hands as he gently pressed and stroked her trembling fingers. "Say no more about that, Polly dear; I should not have been so outspoken, men are slow to learn how sacred a thing a woman's heart is. Do you know, I am now glad you spoke to me as you did, for it taught me a lesson. I love you, Polly dear, as I am sure no other man can, for I have known you from your babyhood. I love you so that if my love stands in the way of your happiness, do you know I should sacrifice it even though it broke my heart?"

"Oh, Luke! what are you talking about?" and Polly looked both troubled and abashed.

"I am only saying, Polly dear, that if I found that you didn't love me with the whole-hearted devotion you thought you did, and if a greater love had crept, through no fault of yours, darling, into your heart, I should go away, should free you and pray God's blessing upon your new love. It would break my heart, but I should do it."

Polly was now weeping; she saw that Luke, as unsophisticated as he was, had been reading her heart, and in that heart there was being waged a battle. She knew Luke's value, and she loved him as much as in her ignorance she had thought men should be loved. There was, in the character of John Paisly, a soft, gentle way with women that seemed to win his way to their hearts, and he was so genial, so refined, and culti-

vated, he had surely made a deep impression in his brief acquaintance with Polly Rutherford Scurlock, upon her heart and life.

Looking up to Luke with streaming eyes, Polly sobbed out softly, "Oh, why did I ever come to Guilford? We were so contented at Skin Quarter!"

"Your coming to Guilford, Polly, has been one of God's providences. You have been preserved from much danger, you have made many friends, and your heart has been brought face to face with the question, 'Which do I love best, Luke Stallings or John Paisly?' It is much better to face and answer that question now, than to make a fatal mistake and become a loveless wife. I had rather possess a pillar of salt, than that."

The effect of Luke's words seemed overwhelming, and Polly, trembling and in an agony of grief, leaned forward and would have fallen but for the supporting arm of Luke. "Poor child, poor child, perhaps I should not have said it so plainly, but 'tis best to settle it. Wipe away your tears, darling, and never shed another one for me while I live; save them for my bier. Let me tell you what I think is best; I will release you from your promise to me, although I am still your lover and you can claim me. I will go away with Colonel John Paisly, and together we will battle for our country. Should we both survive, we will return and you can then decide between us. Should I fall in battle, and I think that is very likely, then you would be unfettered, and my dying prayer shall be for God's richest blessing upon you and John Paisly."

Polly Rutherford was much moved by Luke's words, and as he gently stroked her sunny hair and soothed her, she grew calmer and was at last able to say, "Luke, you are too good, too noble for me, and one regret of

my life will be that I have brought you this great sorrow. I do love you, and yet, and yet—Oh, that I had not met Colonel Paisly!"

"Say not so, dearest Polly. Remember, a love that will not stand trial is of unknown strength. All will come out in accordance with the purposes of an all-wise providence; let me be your loving Luke who carried your school-bag, and fought your battles years agone. Let the future take care of itself; you must be once more a happy girl and take all the love people give you. Do like Aunt Mandy says, 'Take no more on your head than you can kick off with your heels.' "

This quaint old saying Polly had heard from her mother many a time, and it brought a faint smile to her lips, and looking up into Luke's face as he held her in his arms, she said, as her tears dropped upon his tawny beard, "Your heart is all love, Luke, and you deserve the best woman in the world. Let all this be as you say, but remember, I do love you."

"Well, are you willing to pay the postage on that letter I brought you from Aunt Mandy?"

"Oh, Luke, you don't insist?"

"Yes I do, and with deferred interest."

"Oh my! What can I do but pay an honest debt!" And Luke enjoyed the collecting.

Luke felt, as he bade Polly good-night and sought his restful couch, thankful that he had been given strength to speak and ability to do a generous deed toward Polly; and, as he passed into quiet slumber, he called to mind the words of a quaint old proverb, "Deeds are fruits, words are but leaves."

CHAPTER XVIII

AT YORKTOWN

The September days swiftly and delightfully passed away, and Luke Stallings under the kind care of Dr. Caldwell and good Aunt Patsy Gordon had regained his strength and was now eager for the return of Colonel Paisly and the troop on their way to Virginia.

One lovely afternoon Polly had taken Luke along one of her favorite walks through the autumn woods and to a spring deep down under the shadow of a great rock; and as they sat and talked of the happy past, of the dear ones in Chatham, of what might await them in the future, the still air began to vibrate with the far-off notes of a bugle, as clear and true they came across field and bracken from the big road that led up from the south.

"Har, Polly dear, our boys are coming. I hear Mike Kinsey's bugle; let us walk across yon field and greet them as they pass. Colonel Paisly told me that on their return they would camp at Rafe Gordon's."

A brisk walk of a few hundred yards brought them to the road, and soon they saw approaching the Paisly troop with the Colonel and Charley Sheering riding at the head of the column. At sight of Luke and Polly, off went each soldier's head-gear, and loud huzzas greeted them, while the Colonel, Sheering, and Joel

Sowell dismounted and gave them a glad shake of the hand.

"What have you all been doing to Luke, Miss Polly Rutherford? He looks like a new man," said the Colonel joyously.

"Why Aunt Patsy, first, and then Aunt Rachel, have been robbing roost and larder to find enough for him to eat," said Polly with a merry laugh. "I think he should show some improvement."

"And so he does; but I must not keep my boys any longer. They are weary and have a long march before them to-morrow. We have roll call at six o'clock to-morrow morning, Luke, and, then, 'march' is the word. 'Tis needless to say you will be sure to answer. Good-bye, Miss Polly; you must pray for us all, and we will not forget you in the day of battle."

In a moment Colonel Paisly, Charley, and Joel had remounted, the column was in motion, and Luke and Polly were left alone in the road. Long before dawn the next morning the family were astir at Parson Caldwell's, for none were willing to have Luke depart without bidding him a tender good-bye, and the Parson was going with him as far as Rafe Gordon's to say a few words of farewell to the brave boys, many of whom he might never see again.

Breakfast was taken by candle-light, then Luke bade Mrs. Caldwell such a grateful good-bye it brought tears to her eyes. Taking her hand he said, "You have been so sweet and kind to me, Madam, I can never forget you. God will surely reward you for all your tender care of one who never knew a mother's love, but never missed it when with you." The leave-taking between Polly Rutherford and Luke was full of sorrow, for Polly felt that she was parting with one upon whom

she could always depend, one of whose devotion to her there could be no doubt. Luke felt that he was possibly parting forever from the only human being he had ever clung to with an all-absorbing love. The last moment came; he gave her a tender kiss, and, clinging to him with her soft, tender hands on his shoulders, she said in tearful tones, "God bless and keep you, Luke, and bring you back in safety."

Passing out of the house into the darkness of the hour before dawn, Luke and the doctor mounted their horses and soon reached the home of the Gordons, where all was bustle and excitement, Uncle Rafe and Aunt Patsy having determined to serve to the whole troop a parting breakfast. The table had been spread in the center of the large barn, and bonfires were built of blazing light-wood knots in front of the large driveway doors, front and rear. So the interior was illuminated with a ruddy glow, this light being supplemented by a number of candles. Hot yopon, foaming milk, and sparkling cider were served in fresh, creamy-white gourds. There were loaves of rich bread, hot corn-pone, generous beefsteaks, and mutton broils hot from the coals. Roasted potatoes, baked apples, domestic sauce and pickles and honey dripping with its golden sweetness. Poor fellows! How those soldiers feasted, and in the months that followed when rations were served, how often would they talk over that glorious breakfast at Uncle Rafe Gordon's and long for just one more meal like that.

As the gray light of the coming dawn streaked the east and gradually grew rosy, the bugle sounded, each trooper fell into line, and Colonel Paisly walking up to Luke Stallings handed him a folded sheet of paper, saying with a bland smile, "Captain Stallings, take

command of your troop; here is your commission. I shall have quite a squadron as we near the Virginia line; another company will join us."

Luke thanked the Colonel for having sought this promotion for him, and with a few earnest words to his men, assumed command, and then his voice clear and strong rang out upon the morning air: "Attention! We will now give earnest heed to the parting words of Dr. David Caldwell."

With uncovered heads this troop of patriots stood like bronzed statues, except that each face was instinct with intelligent interest, as wise words of cheer and council warmed their hearts and fixed their attention. Closing his impassioned address, the doctor lifted his hands reverently in prayer, pleading that the God of battles would watch over each patriot soul, nerve them to struggle for home and kindred, crown their efforts with success, and bring them all to hearth-stone again if the great purposes of life were thus best served. Were any to sleep their last sleep, he craved for them forgiveness for all sin through Him who died to save, and a joyful awakening in the land of peace.

There was a pause when the prayer was ended. Dr. Caldwell, Uncle Rafe, and Aunt Patsy and Mrs. Paisly passed down the line, giving each soldier a cordial hand-clasp and a "God bless you." Boot and saddle was then sounded, each man mounted his eager steed, they formed in fours, and, with Colonel Paisly, Captain Stallings, Lieutenants Sheering and Joel Sowell at the head of the column, they soon disappeared from view.

"Promotion seems to have struck Brush Creek pretty hard, Colonel; one captain and two lieutenants," said Luke quizzically as they rode along side by side.

"Confidentially, I was looking for the best men I

could find, Luke, and all of you Chatham fellows are good fighters and so popular with the men they will gladly serve under you. It is possible when we get to Yorktown I may be on detached service with Colonel John Laurens, who is a warm personal friend of mine, and is much trusted by General Washington. I think so much of my boys I wish to leave them in the hands of men of my own choosing, and you, Luke, are my first choice."

"I do thank you, Colonel, for your confidence, and shall endeavor to deserve it, although I think it probable Charley Sheering would have filled the place better."

"Sheering is a good man, Luke, but you were my first choice, and I know will not disappoint me. Sheering is next in command and will do his full duty. Should anything happen to you, he will then have the responsibility I now lay on you, my dear fellow. How did you part with that dear girl, Luke? Friendly, I hope."

"Yea, Colonel. Polly Rutherford was as sweet and tender to me as heart could ask and is more precious to me than ever; but her dear heart is divided, and I did as I told you I would."

"You didn't, Luke. How could you?"

"A conscientious man can do anything that he feels it to be his duty to do, Colonel. I told the dear girl I was still her lover, but it was my desire that she should be unpledged to anyone, and therefore I would release her from her promise to me, while she would have every claim upon me she ever had."

"Did she agree to this?"

"Very reluctantly, Colonel; and only as the result of my persuasion. We will have to let affairs drift

until Providence decides for us; and whatever is the will of God I shall submissively acquiesce in."

Colonel Paisly turned toward Luke as they rode side by side, and, reaching for and grasping his right hand, said, "God bless and preserve you, Luke; you are all worthy of Polly's love, and she will never meet on this earth a truer man."

On the evening of the sixth day after breaking camp at Rafe Gordon's, Colonel Paisly and his squadron, consisting of about one hundred and fifty picked men, having crossed James river at a place known now as Micheaux's Ferry and passed around to the north of Richmond and then south-eastward, encamped on the Chickahominy about ten miles from the city. They were now within a day's march of the two armies that were so soon to try conclusions, the stake being the life of a nation. Cornwallis had, in obedience to the command of Sir Henry Clinton, but against his own judgment, selected Yorktown within the broad mouth of the York river, and affording a safe harbor as a place to entrench and defend. He had expected to keep open his water communication and from this stronghold to sally forth from time to time, taking and holding more and more of Virginia territory. It proved to be what our French allies called a cul-de-sac in a double sense, for Yorktown soon had an opening at neither end, and might have been called a barrel with neither bung nor faucet. As they sat by the camp fire that night on the Chickahominy, Colonel Paisly expressed to Luke his determination to volunteer as an aid to Colonel Laurens, whom he was sure would lead in some daring movement.

"Take some of our boys with you, Colonel, and let me lead them," said Luke.

"For Polly's sake I do not think I ought to do that, Luke; you will be in danger enough from infantry and artillery fire all around Yorktown, without my placing you in so hazardous a position as storming a redoubt when 'tis not immediately in your line of duty."

"I very much desire it, Colonel, and my duty is to do a soldier's part anywhere, regardless of danger. Besides, I don't want to see you go into danger, Colonel, without some of your boys to look after your safety; we protest against that."

"Suppose, then, I volunteer our command for any hazardous duty in which Colonel Laurens may need us?"

"That is just what I want; I have no desire, Colonel, when a battle is going on and golden spurs are being won, to hang around the edges doing vidette duty; NO, no."

"You are a game-cock, Luke, and must have your way; but let us turn in under our blankets for the night for we must be on the march before sunrise."

The following afternoon found Paisly and his command leaving James river to their right as they headed from Stone-house road toward Yorktown, taking a road across the peninsula that passed not far from Williamsburg, a road that had been well worn by the artillery and infantry of Washington's army that had passed over it before them. As they drew nearer Yorktown, they passed a number of wagon camps, and the boys had never before seen so great an array of teams, wagons, caissons, and men, indicating the presence of a large army. The magnitude of the struggle loomed up; this gathering together of so much wealth in war material and men, all told the story of a grand effort

for the establishing of a free people in their possession of life, liberty and property.

"This looks like war, Colonel," said Luke.

"Yea, Luke, and I like the drift of things. I had rather be Generals Washington and La Fayette besieging Yorktown with Count De Grasse blockading the York river, than Cornwallis the besieged, with all his seasoned veterans."

They were now well into the camps scattered on either side of the road, and Luke dispatched Joel Sowell and Sergeant Mike Kinsey to select some unoccupied spot, which was soon found and the squadron was halted. The work of going into camp was as methodically done as if the boys had been regulars. Horses were picketed and fed; a large tent, the only one of which the command could boast, was pitched; the detail of cooks went to work with frying pan and skillet, and soon the smell of North Carolina bacon and of scorching dough told of the near approach of the evening meal. The hum of voices all around the blazing campfires, the marquees of some of the general officers that were in sight, the distant sound of army bands as the music trembled on the evening air, the neighing of horses, the dashing about here and there of couriers bearing to each part of the camp orders or information, the passing of field artillery from the rear to the front line, relieving other batteries, the boom of the siege guns as they shot forth sheets of flame from their throats in the gathering twilight, impressed Luke and the Colonel with the solemnity as well as the glamour of war.

"War is stern, war is grand in its horrors, solemn in its issues," said Paisly.

"And still," said Luke, "in a righteous cause there

is no more fitting place to die than on the battle-field. Yielding up one's life for the well-being of others is what the Divine Master did. And now, Colonel, we shall both soon stand together in battle, and the Death Angel may claim one or both of us. Promise me if I fall you will take all that remains of me to Brush Creek, and have me buried in the old graveyard at Skin Quarter. Should I survive you, Colonel, I will carry your remains to your mother and see them laid beside your father at old Buffalo."

"'Tis well to have such an understanding, Luke, but my earnest prayer is that we may both pass through this ordeal in safety. Now we will go to our supper; I hear Kinsey's summons, and after supper we will both go over to the headquarters of Colonel Laurens. I wish you to meet him, for he is a man both the Carolinas should be proud of. He is a Percy Hotspur in dash, with the heart of a Chevalier Bayard."

While they were engaged in discussing a rasher of bacon and a corn pone, Colonel Paisley asked Sergeant Mike Kinsey, bugler and chef de cuisine, a know-all sort of fellow, if he had yet located any of the general officers' quarters, and could tell him whether Colonel Laurens' marquee was very far away.

"I been a-locatin' them big general fellows, Colonel," said Kinsey; "it's most too dark to see 'em from whar we be now, but General Washington's big tent ain't more'n a half mile from here; General Rochambeau, that Frenchman, has quarters in sight o' his'n, and you may be sure you will find Colonel Laurens not far from thar; 'twon't take you more'n twenty minutes to find him."

"That is very satisfactory, indeed, Kinsey; suppose we walk, Luke." And soon they were threading their

way through a perfect labyrinth of tents and campfires and were halted by the marquee guard a little distance from a large tent with a bright fire burning in front of it. Colonel Paisly made known their desire to see Colonel Laurens, and the sentry called out, "Sergeant of the guard, officers to see Colonel Laurens."

The sergeant came promptly forward, saluted Colonel Paisly and Luke, and conducted them to the bright fire, saying, "Wait a moment, gentlemen, Colonel Laurens was engaged a little while ago, and he may since have gone over to General Washington's marquee; I will see."

Soon returning, he conducted the visitors to the entrance, saying, "You will find the Colonel within, gentlemen."

"Welcome, John Paisly! How glad I am to see you; but I thought you were with General Greene," and the handsome face and soldierly form of Colonel John Laurens as well as his voice, gave Paisly welcome.

"A glad shake, old comrade; I am more than glad to see you once more, and I left General Greene so well ahead of Rawdon that my little squadron could well be spared. I wish to introduce to you fighting Captain Luke Stallings, who commands the best volunteer company I ever saw. Luke, this is my friend, Colonel John Laurens."

Luke acknowledged the introduction by extending his hand and saying in hearty tones, "I am pleased to meet you, Colonel Laurens; I have heard Colonel Paisly speak of you so often, you are no stranger; may we know each other better."

"Be seated, friends, if you can find a stool each; I was just examining our engineer's report and plan of

the enemy's lines of fortification. Perhaps you and Captain Stallings would like a peep at them, Paisly?"

"Indeed we would, Laurens, and while we examine them I wish to volunteer, not only my own services, but those of one hundred and fifty as brave men as ever faced an enemy. 'Tis a cavalry squadron, but as dismounted men we wish any post of danger or honor you may assign to us. Luke here would grieve sorely if he is not permitted to share in storming the enemies' works, and he is one of the few men I ever saw that is just spoiling for a fight."

"The time is nearly ripe for an assault upon two redoubts that must be taken; they lie just here——" and Colonel Laurens pointed with his finger to two spots on the parchment before him. "I cannot use all your force, as we are carefully picking our men from among the tried and tested, and have more offers of service than we can accept. You may select from your company, Captain Stallings, fifty men, and you may lead them; the remainder of your force, Paisly, may be sent over to Gloucester Point; there will be some good fighting there, I think."

"I have two good men who can lead the remainder of our force, Laurens, wherever they may be assigned. I shall stay with you and Luke."

"That suits me, Paisly, and I shall go into the fight feeling that I am well supported. I will notify you when we are ready, and the time is not distant now; a matter of a few hours."

The remainder of this visit was taken up in recalling old camp scenes, and talking of mutual friends and kindred in the Carolinas. So it was quite midnight before Paisly and Luke reached their tent and sought slumber beneath their blankets.

The supreme moment at last arrived. The assaulting force consisted of picked men from the French army who undertook the reduction of one redoubt, while Colonels Hamilton and Laurens with a select force from the American army took the post of honor in the reduction of the other. Our men, led by Luke Stallings and Colonels Hamilton, Laurens and Paisly, advanced with steady step until they reached the abatis, a mass of felled trees and sharpened stakes bristling in front of them, backed up by high palisades of timber. There was no pause; onward swept this living tide of men over sharp spikes, swinging themselves up, up, climbing like squirrels, until the top of the palisades was reached, then with a shout dropping down into the ditches only to meet hand to hand and bayonet to bayonet the foe they sought. The clash of sword and bayonet, the shouts of the struggling men, the groans of the wounded and dying, betokened a deadly struggle, but the allies were there to win or die and fought with a desperation that their foes could not resist. Luke Stallings was one of the first to climb over all obstructions into the redoubt, and was met by a stalwart British soldier whom he cut down before him with his sword like a stalk of grain before a scythe. Soon he was surrounded by three men, each endeavoring to pin him to the earth, two with their bayonets, one with a broadsword; and the uneven struggle was kept up fiercely, Luke managing to disable two of his assailants, when a thrust made by the other (a brawny Scotchman), who wielded his huge broadsword with great skill, pierced Luke in the right breast and he fell at the feet of his foe just as Colonel Paisly came to his help and succeeded in disabling the man who had wounded his beloved friend.

"Are you much hurt, Luke?" asked Paisly tenderly as he leaned for a moment over him.

"Yes, Colonel, it's my last call; don't think of me. On with the fight, I hear shouts of victory."

The fighting swept Paisly swiftly away from his comrade, and for some time he was engaged in desperate combat and marvelously escaped serious wounding. Such fighting brought a complete victory, and soon both redoubts were in the hands of the victors, and the ambulance corps and surgeons began the gruesome work of gathering up the dead and wounded. Colonel Paisly had found his way back to poor Luke immediately after the fighting ceased, bringing with him the surgeon of his command. The ugly broadsword thrust was not far from the heart, and Luke had lost much blood and was fast failing in strength when the surgeon reached him. A stimulant was administered, and Doctor Carmichael proceeded to close the gaping wound and staunch the flow; then a stretcher was brought and borne tenderly by Colonel Paisly, Colonel Laurens, and two members of Luke's company, the poor fellow was carried to the marquee in which he had slept the night before, followed by those of his sorrowing company that were not kept on guard duty at the redoubt.

Taking Dr. Carmichael aside, Colonel Paisly sorrowfully consulted him as to Luke's chance to survive what all his friends saw was a most dangerous wound. "It looks hopeless, doctor, but is there no hope? Luke is so strong and is such a perfect man; may he not rally?"

"With stimulants he may be kept here a few hours, Colonel, but Captain Stallings is doomed. I think there is now internal injury and bleeding, and when the

fountain of life grows weaker and weaker he will pass away."

Walking into the tent, Colonel Paisly took a seat on a camp stool by the couch on which Luke lay, and, clasping his nerveless hand between both of his, watched his dying friend's face for some gleam of recognition.

Responding to the gentle pressure of Paisly's hand, Luke turned his bright but fading eyes upon his friend, and said in low tones, "John Paisly, I am dying for my country; dying in the hour of her victory."

"I am praying, Luke, my dear friend, that God will spare you."

"No, no, John Paisly, 'tis best so. God knows what is best. Tell my darling Polly Rutherford I died praying for her happiness. Tell Dr. Caldwell I died in full hope of a glorious immortality. Tell Daddy Scurlock and Aunt Mandy their boy Luke loved them to the last, and died like a soldier should, and he wishes to sleep until resurrection dawn in the old graveyard at Skin Quarter. I know they will give my poor body a resting place. And now, John Paisly, a few words more, for I shall soon be past talking. Protect Polly Rutherford, and cherish her as your own life; her parents are getting old, and I shall die easier to know that you will be a friend to her."

The manly form of Colonel Paisly trembled with emotion and great tears dropped from his over-charged eyes and a great sob was in his voice as he strove to speak. "My more than friend, my brother, it wrings my heart to see you die and I so powerless to win you back to life and happiness. But your patriotic death shall be an inspiration to me, and I shall cherish you in my heart as long as heart and memory endure. Miss Polly Rutherford shall never lack a friend, a protector,

as long as I live, and, dear friend, I shall only be to her what her heart desires and God approves. I will never thrust myself upon her sacred grief and seclusion, except as a mourner with her for the loss of our dearest friend and her lover."

"In the coming years, John Paisly, grief will run its course, and it may be that Polly Rutherford would have you nearer to her than a friend. Be that so, remember the dying words of Luke Stallings were for God's blessing upon you both. And now, I am not strong enough to say farewell to all my boys; but let them form and march through the tent that I may take a last look at them until we meet at roll-call up yonder."

This last order of the beloved Captain was obeyed silently, and with streaming eyes those bronzed and war-worn soldiers took a last look at their captain; and as the last man filed past his couch Luke raised his right hand to a salute, and brought a deep breath as he exclaimed, "Oh, grave, where is thy victory!" and the spirit of Captain Luke Stallings had followed to the home of the ransomed the Captain of his salvation.

CHAPTER XIX

THE WEDDING AT SHAW'S CROSS ROADS

"Mandy, what do you s'pose has become of Doctor Tony? He hain't been over here now for nearly two weeks, and that is amazin'," said Daddy Scurlock as he sat on the porch one evening after supper, holding Roxy Sowell's baby whom she had named Anthony Scurlock. Aunt Mandy and Roxy each filled an arm chair and were busy knitting by twilight.

"Courtin'," was Aunt Mandy's quaint reply, adding, "Tony Sidebottom and Cynthy Shaw have lost so much enjoyable time from sweetheartin' they are a tryin' to catch up."

"For the land's sake! I don't know what they are a waitin' for."

"Nor I," said Roxy; "and, really, 'tis a sure enough sensible match, Aunt Mandy. Doctor Tony needs a wife, and Cynthy is just the girl that will suit him. Won't she clean out the ratholes and cuddies at Hardscrabble, that haven't been swept since I was a baby! You won't know that old place when Cynthy gets hold of it."

"Didn't you hear some one at the horse-rack, Mandy? 'Pears like some one rode up thar just now," said Daddy.

"Yes, old man; and speakin' of Doctor Tony, I'll venture 'tis he; it's high time he was a turnin' up."

"Here, Roxy, take little Tony Scurlock and I will go and see who 'tis anyway," and Daddy tenderly placed

the baby in his mother's arms and walked down to the gate.

"Hello, Amen," was the salutation of Doctor Tony, as with saddle-bags over his left arm he came to meet Scurlock.

"You are a pretty fellow, Tony Sidebottom."

"So Cynthy tells me, Amen."

"She was a long time findin' it out, Tony, and no woman ever discovered it before."

"Daggone if that ain't so, Amen; but it's quite a sensation to have a woman discover it."

"Come in, come in, you lovesick loon, and give an account of yourself. Mandy has just been wondering what had become of ye."

"I said so," exclaimed Aunt Mandy, as she gave Doctor Tony a handshake. "Have you had supper? Did you come from home or the cross roads?"

"Well, suppose ye ask a few more questions handrunnin', Aunt Mandy; but before ye do I'll answer these. I am just from the cross roads, and Cynthy gave me supper before I started."

"Then you feel quite sassy, and are not beholdin' to me for any supper."

"Not to-night, Aunt Mandy, but, let me tell ye, there is no place in this province where I enjoy myself in the eatin' way as I do at Skin Quarter. I told Cynthy this evening if she just would keep such a house at Hardscrabble as you did here I would think I had got to the promised land. But I haven't spoken to Roxy and Tony Scurlock. How do you do, Roxy? and let me kiss the baby; I shaved clean this mornin'."

Roxy gave Doctor Tony a hearty greeting, and baby cooed and puffed his rosy cheeks at him with a gurgling sound that Roxy interpreted as "howdy-do."

"And now," resumed Aunt Mandy, when Doctor Tony had settled into an armchair and lit his pipe, "when do you expect to reach the promised land, Doctor Tony?"

"Daggoned soon, Aunt Mandy. I wish it had all been over before Luke and Joel and Charley went away and Polly Rutherford went to Guilford. Looks as if I would be lonesome gettin' married and all my best friends among the young folks gone away."

"Have you set the day, Doctor Tony?"

"Yes, Cynthy has agreed to have it over and done with, and on next Thursday we shall expect all our friends to come up to the cross roads and see the splicin' done in good style."

"Who have you got to tie the knot?"

"Why, who else can we get but old Father Rowe, and, if experience goes for anything, he ought to do it as well as anybody. I've seen him weld wagin tire many a time, and what he puts together don't come apart easy, and Cynthy and me want to be welded for life, hit or miss, better or for worse."

"That's the right talk, Doctor Tony, and Mandy Scurlock's word for it, if you do your part by Cynthy Shaw you will have reached the promised land, for she is hard to match. Have you seen old Father Rowe about it yet, Doctor Tony?"

"Trust a woman to find out things. Yes; old Blaze wanted a new shoe, and I rode by thar and had quite a chat with the old man. Found him at the forge, his face smutted with charcoal, his sleeves rolled up, and hammerin' away for dear life. Says I, 'Howdy, Parson; can ye stop long enough to put a shoe on Blaze?' He looked up, laid down his sledge, and, telling his striker how to finish the job, he said, 'Howdy, Tony;

always got time to shoe a good horse, Tony. Had him ten years, hain't ye?' 'Just about,' says I, and then while he was a trimmin' Blaze's right forefoot I axed him if he wa'n't good at splicin' things so they wouldn't come apart. 'That's part o' my business,' says he, and then I up and tells him that Cynthy Shaw and me had agreed to be spliced on Thursday of next week, and we wanted him to do the job, and that when the job was done I would send him as a fee one of the finest yearlin' heifers, a calf of my old Blossom, in Chatham County. The old parson gave a loud whistle, slapped me on the back, and said, 'I always thought you had a lot o' good sense, Tony Sidebottom, and now I know it. I will be sartin to be thar, Providence not a hinderin', and nothin' but death will part the weldin' I shall then do; God A'mighty sartinly smiled on ye when he sent you Cynthy.' Now, Aunt Mandy, you know all the ins and outs of the whole business, and of course you will all be thar, and so will Corneal Tyson and Hannah Sheering."

"We shall certainly be there, barrin' accidents, and old Anachy shall bake Cynthy a weddin' cake with egg and sugar frostin' all over it; and we will send her over a fat gobbler, a pig, and a saddle of mutton for the feast. I'll do better than that, Dr. Tony; I'll send Anachy up to the cross roads a Monday to stay and do the cookin', for Cynthy shan't be worried and worn out gettin' ready."

"I wonder how Cynthy is along with her sewing, Doctor Tony?" asked Roxy.

"Can't say; hain't got that fur on in our acquaintance, but she's been a sewin' on somethin' every time I've been thar for a month past; I don't guess though a little help would hurt, Roxy."

"Well, when Aunt Mandy sends Anachy up on Monday, I will take baby and go along and spend the time with Cynthy and will help her all I can between Monday and Thursday."

"Daggoned if you women folks don't make me feel like blubberin'; you are so kind to Cynthy and me. Since this cussed war broke loose, I have been a thinkin' the world belonged to the devil and things was all wrong end foremost; but findin' Cynthy and then havin' sich friends as you are puts a smile on everything; God bless ye. Have ye heard anything from Polly Rutherford since Luke and the boys left, Aunt Mandy?"

"Not a blessed word, Doctor Tony; looks as if Polly Rutherford had about as well be in furreign parts for all the word I can get from her. You haven't got another letter for me in your bootleg?"

"No indeed, wish I had; I heard the other day that General Greene had walloped Rawdon clean out at Eutaw Springs. Our boys hadn't had time to get thar, as the fight took place nigh onto three weeks or more ago. Tim Shaw is a pretty good barometer, Amen, and I can always tell how the king's cause is goin' by the way he talks. You know he has been kinder astraddle of the fence, no Quaker, for he's a hardshell and b'lieves in deep water salvation; but he's ag'in' fightin'. Well, t'other night I was a talkin' to him and tellin' him whar I thought all good people b'longed, and daggoned if he didn't agree with me. In fact, he told me that at first he thought the king was right, but since he had sent such men as Dave Fannin' to worry, harry, and kill, and to burn and destroy our property, he was ag'in' the whole business and wasn't sorry when he heard that the Royalists got licked."

"I think, myself," said Amen, "that the royal cause

is on its last legs, and all four of the legs sprained. If we could only get the province rid of such fellows as Dave Fannin', we might soon hope for peace."

"I am anxious to hear from Virginia just now, Amen; if we can only overthrow Cornwallis and break up his army these plunderers like Fannin' will have to leave the country."

"That's so, Tony; but the more our folks lick the British, the worse Fannin' seems to get, and I'm afeard to bring Polly Rutherford home yet a while."

"Wouldn't think of bringin' Polly Rutherford home until the spring, Amen; she's safe with David Caldwell, and 'tis norated that she is a studyin' hard and larnin' a whole lot of Latin, Greek, and figgers."

"That's so," said Aunt Mandy; "Colonel Paisly told me when he was here that Doctor Caldwell said Polly Rutherford was smarter at figgers and tongues than any boy around Buffalo or Alamance, and he was proud to have her larn all he could teach her. It's mighty gratifyin', but hard though to have the dear child so far away; but, land sakes! 'tis most ten o'clock; we mustn't talk all night. I'm going to bed, and Roxy and baby ought to have been asleep an hour ago. Your bed is all ready, Doctor Tony; just go into Luke's room."

The eventful Thursday of next week arrived and found Cynthy Shaw and her wedding a strong magnet, drawing about her many kind neighbors and friends, and the old house at the cross roads promised to be crowded to its utmost capacity. Early in the afternoon, Corneal Tyson and Hannah Sheering with the children had arrived, and they were soon followed by Amen Scurlock, Aunt Mandy, Roxy, and Master Tony Scurlock Sowell. Tim Shaw gave his guests a blunt

and hearty reception, taking the men into his room where a bright lightwood fire had banished the chill of the autumn air, and where, on an old cherry sideboard of his own making, sat a decanter of rum and a few rare glass tumblers, while a box of tobacco and pipes enough to go around awaited them on a little circular table.

"Now, gentlemen," said Tim, "this is yer last chance to drink fa'r to a bride in Tim Shaw's house. Doctor Tony Sidebottom is goin' to take my Cynthy away, and the gal's heart seems to be set on it. Tony is a good man, but Cynthy is a better woman, and he's a goin' to get the best end of the bargain. But I'll not say anything ag'in' it, and the gal shall go from the cross roads to Hardscrabble with my blessing."

Just then the short stout figure of Parson Davy Rowe darkened the doorway, and Tim Shaw espying him called out, "Welcome, Pa'son; come in. We are just about to drink to the future happiness of my Cynthy and Doctor Tony Sidebottom; come in, come in."

Advancing to meet Tim's broad, brown hand, Parson Rowe shook it heartily, then greeted Tyson and Scurlock in like manner, saying, "Howdy, all. 'Pears like ye are fixin' for the fatted calf, the music and the dancin'. I s'pose Doctor Tony is the prodigal son, and ye are about to drink to his comin'. Now, I am ag'in' drinkin' on principle, ye all know that, but thar are times when a very leetle taken for the stomach's sake and the ofting infirmity is 'lowable. Tim, ye may jest pour me out about two fingers in that tumbler and add a leetle water."

"Two o' your fingers or mine, Parson? It makes a lot o' difference, bein' as your fingers is powerful thick."

"As I have to take the dram, Tim, jest measure by

mine. Ah! that's 'bout right. Here's to the health of Tony Sidebottom and Cynthy; may they live long together, live happy, and die when they can't help it. Amen."

All drank to this toast given by Parson Rowe, the parson then adding in solemn manner, "Drink light, friends; Tim Shaw is as famous for his good old rum as Amen Scurlock thar for his peach and honey; much of either is dangersome; remember, it made a fool o' Noah once."

"Did Noah get drunk on rum, apple jack, or peach and honey, Pa'son?" questioned Tim Shaw.

"I have always thought it must 'a' been peach and honey, Tim, although thar was plenty o' vineyards and wine about. Leastwise, if I had a been Noah and was goin' to git drunk, I should sartinly have took peach and honey; but I hope Noah is not goin' to be imitated in that manner here to-night; let us all tetch light."

While Tim was entertaining the gentlemen in his room, Aunt Mandy, Roxy Sowell, Hannah Sheering and the children were ushered by Cynthy into the best room where a cheerful fire awaited them and everything looked bright and tidy there. There were late roses, golden-rod, and other late wild flowers all about the room in earthen jars, while holly and cedar boughs were grouped in an artistic way in the corners and about the high mantle-shelf.

"Bless your dear heart, Cynthy," exclaimed Aunt Mandy, "you have got everything lookin' just beautiful, and you are more beautiful than everything else. Are you not a'most tired to death, poor child?"

"No indeed, Aunt Mandy; your sending Aunt Anachy over took a world of worry off of me, and then Roxy did as much of all this as I did. So, thanks to my

friends, I feel as fresh as a daisy. Now, when you have had a sip of gooseberry wine and get real warm, come into my room and I will show you Daddy Shaw's wedding present made by his own hands, and some other presents, too."

Curiosity overcame all desire for more warmth, and the gooseberry wine was sipped in great haste, when the whole party followed Cynthy into the bridal chamber. There their eyes were amazed by finding a beautifully polished bureau and bedstead with table and chairs to match, all of solid oak, and shining like gold. The floor was covered with a rag carpet of Cynthy's own weaving, and in a pattern she had designed. There in the chimney-corner sat a set of shovel and tongs, made and polished by Parson Rowe's own hands, and presented as a wedding gift. The bed was covered with a snowy white quilt, a gift from Aunt Mandy. Hannah Sheering had presented Cynthy with a beautiful shawl Uncle Tyson had obtained through one of his Tory friends at Wilmington, and Roxy had brought her six pairs of soft lambswool stockings of her own spinning and knitting.

"My dear friends, I am rich!" exclaimed Cynthy, as she kissed every one in turn, beginning with Aunt Mandy; "but I am richest in friends; you are all so good to me. One has to have something like this happen to them to find out how many friends they have got." And Cynthy's quaint allusion to her coming marriage produced a merry laugh.

Just at sunset the groom arrived, and old Blaze was taken to the stable and royally fed, while his master was ushered into Tim's room and warmly greeted by his friends.

"Thar comes the man the occasion waits for!" ex-

claimed Father Rowe; "how do the bridegroom-elect feel?"

"Like a peacock in full feather, or, as my friend, Corneal Tyson thar, would say, I am as spry as a three-year-old in a grass patch."

"Stand up and spin around, Tony!" exclaimed Corneal Tyson. "Gentlemen, just look how Dr. Anthony Sidebottom is rigged out. A brand-new black homespun suit, white linen, ruffled shirt, silver shoe buckles, silk stockings; whew! hunt me a wife, too, Tony."

"What you ought to ha' done for yourself long years ago, Corneal Tyson; a man by himself is like one side o' a pair o' shears, and needs t'other side to make him much account," said Father Rowe.

"Can't agree with ye, Passon; I am a good piece o' steel, but wa'n't intended to be fashioned into shears, but make a pretty fa'r jackknife that will whittle whips and whistles for other people's children. Now, Tony Sidebottom is a-doin' the right thing, but Corneal Tyson will jest hold on to his maiden name."

This quaint announcement produced a laugh that was contagious, and its echoes were heard in different keys all over the rambling house.

"Now," said Tim Shaw, "we must all brace up ag'in for the final act in this drama; I propose a health, long life and prosperity to Doctor Tony Sidebottom," and Tim proceeded to fill the glasses. All arose from their seats, and Father Rowe said solemnly, "Remember, friends, Tim Shaw's rum is very seductious; tetch light; tetch light. How many fingers in my tumbler, Tim?"

"A leetle the rise o' two by your measure, Passon."

"Ah, that's a plenty; let us all remember Noah."

"I thought we was remembering Tony Sidebottom," said Corneal Tyson with a merry laugh.

"And so we be, Corneal," said the parson, "but I only meant that in partakin' of Tim's remarkable good rum we should not forget that Noah once got drunk."

As the gentlemen put down their glasses there was a light tap at the door, and, on Tim's opening it, he found Aunt Mandy Scurlock standing there with a bright smile all over her good face as she caught a glimpse of the merry-making inside. "So you have begun the rout. I'll be bound you will get a good time out of any occasion that draws a crowd. But ye are all wanted, and Doctor Tony Sidebottom most of all. So come along into the best room, and we will have this business settled."

The best room was crowded with neighbors and friends of the bride and groom, and Father Rowe, taking his stand in an open space reserved for the ceremony, awaited their coming. As Aunt Mandy remarked afterward, "They made a bonny couple." Cynthy wore a soft white homespun dress of her own spinning and weaving; her eyes were bright with the light of true love for the man she had chosen; her cheeks were abloom with health, and a sweet suspicion of a smile played about the corners of her mouth. Doctor Tony stood as straight as a hickory sapling, his face, rugged as it was, looked positively handsome, and his earnest, contented look indicated that he thought, at least, that he was approaching the promised land. The ceremony as performed by Father Rowe was quaint, brief, but satisfactory, tying them so fast with the tongue they could never undo the knot with the teeth, as he afterward told them. As they took their places before him, Father Rowe held out a hand to each, and

then placed their right hands together, saying, "J'ine hands. And now, Doctor Anthony Sidebottom, do you take this woman, Cynthy Shaw, whom you hold by the hand, to be your only true and lawful wife; do you promise to love, cherish, protect and defend her; to stick to her in prosperity and hard times, to make her a full pardner in all your joys, to comfort her in sorrow, untwill death do part you? Do you?"

"I do," said Doctor Tony.

"And now, Cynthy, do you take this man whom you hold by the hand to be your true and lawful husband; do you promise to love him, honor him, obey him, and stick to him in prosperity and adversity, to do all you can for his comfort, untwill death shall sever this bond? Do you?"

Cynthy answered audibly, "I do."

"And now, by the authority I hold as a minister of the Gospel, and accordin' to the laws of this province, I pronounce ye man and wife. What God hath joined together let no man put asunder. Amen." The silence was broken by a hum of happy voices, and the bride was first kissed by the groom, then by Parson Rowe, and afterward she became a prey to the group of friends gathered around her, and rejoiced in very many tender evidences of being loved.

The evening that followed the wedding was a long and happy one; the elders sat around the fire and told of many bright occasions in which they had mingled in days long gone by. The younger folk, led by Doctor Tony and Cynthy, danced a number of Scotch reels to the music of Tim Shaw's fiddle, and Aunt Mandy and Daddy Scurlock showed the lads and lasses how to dance the hornpipe. Only those guests who lived near by thought of going home. Beds were provided for

Tyson's folk, Daddy Scurlock and Aunt Mandy, Roxy and baby, and old Parson Rowe, while the younger members of the party were found dancing in the dining room at daylight when Aunt Mandy came to roust them out, as she said, to make ready for breakfast.

Tim Shaw had not closed his eyes, but played his fiddle for the young folk all night long.

CHAPTER XX

A SAD HOME COMING

"We have met with a sad loss, Laurens," said Colonel Paisly, as, standing side by side, they gazed upon the dead face of Luke Stallings.

"What a soldier he was, Paisly!"

"Yea, and what a man! He had very limited chances, but there was no knightlier gentleman in our army than Luke Stallings. Laurens, I shall get a furlough and, taking Lieutenant Sowell and an escort from his company, I shall bear his remains home for burial; his heroic clay is worthy of all honor. He had no kindred, but a sweet girl's heart will be wrung with anguish when she hears the sad tidings, and her parents loved Luke as if he had been their own son."

The sad details were carried out, and at early dawn on the following morning Colonel Paisly, Lieutenant Sowell, and three members of the troop, escorting a small covered army wagon in which was the encoffined body of Captain Luke Stallings, left behind them the campfires of Yorktown and began the sad homeward journey.

On the evening of the fifth day after leaving camp the sad little procession reached the fork in the road leading to the home of Doctor David Caldwell. "I wish I knew what was best," said Paisly to Sowell. "It will be dreadful to have a sight of the dead body of our friend the first intimation that Miss Scurlock will have had of his death."

"She may have heard rumors," suggested Sowell.

"I do not wish to risk that, Joel; we had better go on to Uncle Rafe's, and I will then ride over to Doctor Caldwell's and break the news as gently as I can."

"That would be best, Colonel," replied Joel, and, riding forward, they soon reached the Gordon home. It was twilight, and Uncle Rafe was at his big barn, seeing to the feeding of his stock, when Holiday came rushing to the door, calling out, "Mars' Rafe, Mars' Rafe! Mars' John Paisly is at de gate; he only got four soldiers wid him and one in a box; I s'pects de others is all killed."

Rafe Gordon hurried out to the gate and gave Colonel Paisly and his escort a hearty welcome. "Welcome, my nephew; welcome, Lieutenant Sowell; welcome, boys. You return with but few of those who breakfasted with me a short while ago."

"We are on a sad errand, uncle; within this wagon is all that is mortal of our beloved Stallings, and we are the escort of honor."

"Oh, no, John. Stallings killed? Surely the enemy hath dealt us a hard blow." And Uncle Rafe sobbed like a child, exclaiming, "How can we ever tell Patsy and Polly Rutherford?"

Meanwhile, Holiday had rushed into the kitchen, where Aunt Patsy was superintending the preparation of a new kind of cake sister Ruth had been telling her about, and startled her with the announcement he had made to Mars' Rafe.

"Do you know who it is Colonel Paisly is bringing home for burial, Holiday?" she asked.

"Not certain'y, marm, but I thinks 'tis Mars' Stallings; I heard 'em talkin' about him."

As swiftly as her ponderous form could move, Aunt

Patsy passed from the kitchen to the front hall door, and, throwing it open, met her nephew, Lieutenant Sowell, and her husband, just coming up the porch steps. Clasping John Paisly in her arms, the old lady exclaimed, "I am so glad to see that you are safe, John; but who is it you are bringing home for burial?"

"It is dear Luke Stallings, Aunt Patsy, and this is the saddest journey of my life. Oh, how shall I tell Miss Scurlock and dear Aunt Mandy and Daddy Scurlock!"

"Oh, John, this is a sad night, and the poor fellow felt a presentiment that it was coming, too, for he told me he did not expect to survive the next battle. Poor Polly! you and Rafe must ride over to Doctor Caldwell's after supper and fetch Polly and the parson. Now, Rafe, see that poor Captain Stallings' remains are brought into the drawing-room, and there the guard of honor shall watch over him to-night. Ah, little did I think that I should never again welcome him in life and health to our home." And Aunt Patsy wept as a mother might at the loss of a son.

A light was burning in Doctor Caldwell's room used by him as office and study, sometimes schoolroom, when Rafe Gordon and Colonel Paisly tied their horses at the rack; the rest of the house was shrouded in darkness. Walking up to the entrance, Rafe knocked on the door, and they soon heard the firm, answering steps of the doctor, and, candle in hand, he lighted them in. "So glad to see you, John; I have been listening for tidings from Yorktown. How goes the siege?"

"'Tis all over, doctor; Cornwallis has surrendered, and our liberties are virtually won. I heard that since I left Yorktown."

"Praise God for this news, John; but what brings you home so soon?"

"A sad but loving errand, doctor; I came with an escort bearing to his native sod the remains of our beloved friend, Captain Luke Stallings."

The doctor remained silently praying a moment with his right hand uplifted, then said audibly, "The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

Colonel Paisly then related the circumstances of Luke's death, and delivered his dying message to the doctor—"Tell Doctor Caldwell I died in joyous hope of a glorious immortality."

Grasping John Paisly's hand and with tears streaming from his eyes, the doctor exclaimed, "Oh, death, where is thy sting? Oh, grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. We shall miss him, John, but we must not grieve for him; such a death was worthy of the cause and the man. His name will live when marble monuments shall have crumbled into dust."

"Has Miss Scurlock retired, doctor? She must be told of this."

"Yes, poor lass; she has not been gone from my study more than half an hour. I will call her, for I am sure she will wish to go over to Rafe's with us." The tender voice of Doctor Caldwell was heard calling at the door of a room adjoining and communicating with the one that was occupied by the doctor and his wife. "Polly, lass; are you asleep? Waken, my child, and come to the study. I wish to speak with you."

"I will be with you in five minutes, uncle," came the prompt reply, and within that time Polly made her appearance at the study door, accompanied by Aunt

Rachel, and they were much startled to see Colonel Paisly and Uncle Rafe Gordon with the doctor.

"Colonel Paisly, Uncle Rafe, why have you come at this hour? What is the matter, Uncle Caldwell?" asked Polly.

"You are a brave lass, Polly; a strong lass; and you need now divine strength to bear sad tidings."

"Oh, what have you to tell me, dear uncle? Do speak, I shall try to bear it."

"It has pleased God, my child, to call our beloved young friend, Luke Stallings, to a higher service. Our loss is his infinite gain; you must bear the stroke, dear Polly, asking for grace and strength."

"Oh, where is Luke, my Luke? I must go to him. Colonel Paisly, what have you done with Luke?"

"Come to me, my child," said the doctor in great tenderness, and folding her in his arms he told her of the triumphant death scene in the marquee at Yorktown; of all Luke's tender messages, and that all that was mortal of him was lying in the drawing-room at Rafe Gordon's.

"Come, uncle, let us go and watch by him until they take him away," she sobbed; "my heart is sore and weary. God help me."

Had Colonel Paisly ever doubted that in the depths of her heart Polly Rutherford did love Luke Stallings, one glimpse at the expression of agony on her sad face would have convinced him that she did, for as she turned to leave the room and make ready for the ride to the Gordons, she staggered and would have fallen but for the supporting arm of Aunt Rachel tenderly thrown around her. Paisly's own heart was sore; he longed to speak some word of comfort to the stricken

girl, but felt that silence now was far better than any attempt at speech.

Silently they rode along beneath the dim starlight, and were not long in reaching the Gordons, when Doctor Caldwell gently lifted Polly from her saddle and, placing his strong, loving arm about her, almost carried her up the steps and into the porch, where she found shelter and comfort in the loving embrace and tender kiss of Aunt Patsy. "Come straight into my room, Polly darling; dear child, my heart bleeds for you." And Aunt Patsy led Polly into her bright, cheerful chamber, lit by a blazing lightwood fire, and, seating herself in a big armchair, took the weeping girl into her arms and strove to comfort her.

"I am so cold, Aunt Patsy, so chilled, so heartsore; it seems that all the sunshine has gone out of my life. Luke loved me so; was so tender, so true, so patient; and I—oh, I was cruel; I was mean. I did not appreciate God's gift, and now He has taken him from me."

"Poor child, you must not reproach yourself so; the love you gave Luke made him very happy; he esteemed your favor more than fame or treasure. While you have lost him, remember the cause for which he sacrificed life and love. You loved a hero, Polly, and he died in the moment of the greatest victory our beloved country has achieved."

"While all that is true, Aunt Patsy, my heart must ache, for I cannot help calling up the times I have been unkind to him. Oh, that I could blot out that part of our life, and he is lost to me. Can I once more see his face, Aunt Patsy?"

"I will consult John Paisly and brother Caldwell, darling; it might be better to remember Luke as you parted from him," Aunt Patsy replied tenderly.

Aunt Patsy released Polly from her arms and bade her rest on a soft couch while she went into the drawing-room to see the colonel and Doctor Caldwell as to the advisability of letting the darling girl look once more at the face of her lover. "What do you think of our darling Polly's being allowed to see Luke, Doctor Caldwell, John?"

"He is wonderfully natural, Aunt Patsy, and seems providentially well preserved," said the colonel. "He is a splendid example of manhood, even in death, and if the dear lass wishes to see him she must, sister Patsy; I will go with you and fetch her," said the doctor. As Doctor Caldwell, Aunt Patsy and Polly Rutherford entered the drawing-room, the colonel quietly withdrew, for he felt that it would be sacrilege for him to witness this meeting between the living and the dead.

Standing over the exposed face of Luke Stallings, Doctor Caldwell said with a sob in his voice, "My dear lass, we stand in the presence of a hero, and you must be brave like he was, and ask for grace to make this sacrifice. I shall follow his sacred dust to Chatham, and there commit it to the keeping of his native sod, until resurrection dawn. Let us pray." In tones full of pathos and tender love, Doctor Caldwell bore all the stricken ones up to a throne of grace, seeking comfort, asking for strength to bear, wisdom to follow duty even though it should lead them through the gates of death. As his voice ceased, Polly gazed upon the marble-like face of her lover, and exclaiming, "Noble, beautiful; so patient, so tender; even in death," and falling into Aunt Patsy's arms, swooned. Doctor Caldwell bore the insensible girl to Aunt Patsy's chamber, and, applying a restorative, soon brought her to consciousness;

then bidding her retire and rest, he gave Aunt Patsy an anodyne to administer and quietly withdrew.

"I thought I should be allowed to spend the remainder of the night by Luke, Aunt Patsy," she said plaintively.

"You are not strong enough, my darling, and if you wish to be up in the morning when they start, you must rest now. Come, take this," and Aunt Patsy held the sleeping potion to her lips.

On the afternoon of the second day after leaving Rafe Gordon's, Colonel Paisly and his escort, accompanied by Doctor Caldwell and Rafe Gordon, reached Shaw's crossroads, and there halted for a little while that they might dispatch a messenger ahead of them to Skin Quarter to prepare Daddy Scurlock and Aunt Mandy for their coming.

"You had better ride ahead, Joel," said Colonel Paisly, "and tell the dear old people as gently as you can. I know, too, you are anxious to see that wife and baby."

"Thank you, Colonel; I will be as gentle as I can, but it's a sad errand. Yonder comes old Blaze, and I will get Doctor Tony Sidebottom to go with me."

Cynthy and the doctor were spending some days with Tim Shaw, preparatory to Tim's removal to Hardscrabble, and the doctor was just returning from a round of visits. "Hello, hello, hello. Daggoned glad to see you all!" he exclaimed. "But what do all this mean?" as he gave all a hearty handshake and cordially recognized his introduction to Doctor Caldwell and Rafe Gordon.

" 'Tis sad news to tell, doctor," said Paisly, "but we are bringing our dear friend, Luke Stallings, home for burial at Skin Quarter."

"My God! Luke Stallings——" And Doctor Tony's voice trembled with emotion as he spoke.

"Yes, doctor; there lies a dead patriot whose name will live on from generation to generation. He died in the moment of victory, a willing sacrifice for the liberties of his people. He lived long enough to know that Cornwallis would surrender, and he did surrender."

"I am going on ahead, Doctor Tony, to tell Daddy Scurlock and Aunt Mandy; would you mind riding over with me?" said Joel.

"I will go with you, Joel, but it looks like I am always the bearer of bad news of late. You know, I told 'em about the capture of the court and of the governor. Yes, I will go, but my heart is down in my boots at this sad news. Luke Stallings dead! Why, he scasely had his equal in Chatham County, and I loved him like my own son. I know Cynthy will grieve. Wait a minute, Joel, I must speak to Cynthy; she's my wife now, you must know."

Doctor Tony entered the house, and soon came out again accompanied by Tim Shaw and Cynthy. Tim had always liked Luke from his childhood, and Cynthy had been his playfellow in their school days; so two more earnest mourners approached the little army wagon, and gazed with tearful eyes upon the box that now held all that was mortal of Luke Stallings.

"I am going over to Skin Quarter to break the sad news; you can follow on with your daddy, Cynthy," said Doctor Tony, and, mounting old Blaze, he accompanied Lieutenant Sowell to the Scurlock home.

"Land sakes, Roxy, Roxy! I do believe yonder comes Joel with Doctor Tony!" exclaimed Aunt Mandy as she stood on her front porch and gazed down the road, one hand shading her eyes from the western sun. Roxy

was not long in responding to Aunt Mandy's call, and catching up Master Tony Scurlock from his quilt on the floor, she rushed into the porch and down the path toward the front gate and the horse-rack, and was soon clasped in her husband's arms. "Oh, Joel, I am so glad to welcome you home, and baby is glad, too, although he is a bit scared," said Roxy, laughing and crying by turns. "But you don't look glad, Joel; what is the matter?"

"I am glad indeed to see you and our precious babe, but my errand home makes me sad, Roxy. Do tell her and Aunt Mandy, Doctor Tony, for I just can't do it."

"It's daggoned hard on me, Aunt Mandy, to be the bearer of bad news every time, but you must all know it. Poor Luke Stallings was killed in the storming of a redoubt at the siege of Yorktown, and Colonel Paisly and a military escort, with Rafe Gordon and Doctor Caldwell, are at the crossroads with his body, bringing it here for burial. Joel came over with me in advance to tell ye. Where is Amen, Aunt Mandy?"

Aunt Mandy did not answer the question, but, burying her face in her homespun apron, sobbed as if her heart were breaking, crying out, "My poor boy; no more shall I see your bonny smile and hear your cheery voice." Then, turning away, walked toward the house.

"She's hard hit, is Aunt Mandy. Whar is Amen, Roxy?" said Doctor Tony.

"Daddy Scurlock rode over to Corneal Tyson's early this morning; he should be back by now, doctor; let us all go into the house, I must see after Aunt Mandy."

Daddy Scurlock reached home before the arrival of the cortege from the crossroads, and received the sad tidings as David did the death of a much more unworthy son than Luke had been; the loss of Luke was

a sore grief to the old man. When Colonel Paisly delivered to him and to Aunt Mandy, alone, Luke's dying message, both of them wept piteously, Daddy Scurlock exclaiming between sobs, "Yea, my son, thou shalt rest next to the spot that shall give me sepulchre, nor shall weeds invade thy grave while I live."

The news of the arrival of the body of Captain Luke Stallings spread over the Brush Creek settlement, and friends and neighbors gathered from afar to be present at the funeral. The house, the yard, the road in front of Skin Quarter was crowded with people, and many who had known Luke in childhood sat through the night as watchers around the bier. It was a lovely winter morning when, borne by Colonel Paisly, Joel and the members of his troop, Doctor Tony Sidebottom and Tim Shaw, Luke was laid to rest beneath the cedars in Skin Quarter graveyard. Tender were the words of old Father Rowe, and eloquent was the tribute to his life and heroism spoken by Doctor David Caldwell, closing with those words that always smite the heart, "Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, until resurrection dawn."

A few months after the close of the war Colonel Paisly had erected over the grave of his beloved friend a memorial stone bearing this inscription:

A MEMORIAL TO
CAPTAIN LUKE STALLINGS
Aged 26

Who died from wounds received in battle at Yorktown, Virginia, November the 13th, 1781

"I died in joyous hope of a glorious Immortality."
"Weed well his grave, ye men of goodness, for he was your fellow."

CHAPTER XXI

SACRIFICE THE PRICE OF LIBERTY

With a sad heart Colonel John Paisly left behind him the mound of earth that covered Luke Stallings and took leave of the sorrowing hearts in and around Skin Quarter. Accompanied by Doctor David Caldwell and Rafe Gordon, he and his escort returned to Guilford on the morning after the funeral, and, remaining with his mother only a day and night, he had returned to Yorktown without again seeing Polly Rutherford. He knew of the surrender of Cornwallis, but he knew not whither the Continental troops there assembled would be ordered, and he was anxious to rejoin his old command and share their fortunes, whatever they might be. It was no hard matter to locate the troop now, under the command of Charley Sheering, who had been promoted to the captaincy, and Joel Sowell found the first lieutenancy awaiting him when he, Colonel Paisly and the escort reached camp. There was the marquee in which Luke Stallings had died, on the same spot it had first been pitched, and Charley Sheering had a bright campfire burning and everything looking warm and cheery as the colonel and Joel rode up about twilight. It was a bleak and cold November evening; the wind, sharp and cutting, came from the broad surface of the river and bore on its chilly breath feathery flakes of snow; and our weary travelers wel-

comed the bright, blazing campfires, and were glad indeed to seek the shelter of the marquee.

"I have been looking for you and Joel, Colonel!" exclaimed Charley, as, leaving the log fire, he came forward to greet them. "You have had a cold ride today, and need something hot; come right in out of the wind." Charley Sheering was an ingenious fellow, and believed in being as comfortable as possible under all conditions. So in his leisure moments he had constructed a stick and mud fireplace and chimney to the marquee, and when the colonel and Joel entered they found a bright blazing fire which shed a ruddy glow over the interior, while comfortable camp stools awaited them. At a safe distance from the fireplace he had constructed three bunks, well covered with wheat straw and overspread with blankets, and by the side of each bunk was spread a pine tag mat, curiously wrought, the tags being laced together by elm bark strings.

"Hello, Charley Sheering; you are getting luxurious!" exclaimed the colonel. "I had not expected to return to such luxury in coming back to Yorktown."

"There is nothing but the chimney, Colonel, that I cannot move, and our old school teacher's motto used to be, *'Dum vivimus vivamus.'* We live as many hours at Yorktown as we do elsewhere, so, 'live while we live.'"

"You are a philosopher, Charley; many people suffer with privations they have the ability to avert, and any soldier of ordinary common sense can be quite comfortable in camp if he will only try to be."

"I am quite ambitious, Colonel, along that line, and, if we stay here long enough, shall weave a carpet to spread over this sand and to keep our bare feet reasonably clean as we move about the tent."

"That reminds me, Charley; what do you hear? How long does Colonel Laurens think we shall remain in Virginia?"

"I saw Colonel Laurens to-day, and asked him that very question. He says General Washington thinks General Greene should now be reinforced, so that he can drive the British out of the south entirely. Laurens himself is going to Greene, and we can go, too."

"The very thing, Charley, for we are no longer needed in Virginia, and I shall not rest content until the last invader has been driven from our soil and out to sea. I am very tired, but must see Laurens to-night and talk it all over with him."

The "chef de cuisine," as Sergeant Kinsey continued to style himself, now made his appearance with several rude earthenware dishes and wooden platters, soon spreading supper upon a rudely constructed table, and then he proceeded to greet Colonel Paisly and Joel.

"Howdy, Colonel; howdy, lieutenant. I'm as proud to see you both as if I had found a new pa'r of shoes, which I hain't, and needs 'em bad, too."

"Has our quartermaster no shoes on hand, sergeant?" asked the colonel.

"Nary a pa'r that will fit a number twelve foot, Colonel. My feet ar' big enough to walk on water; the quartermaster don't call me nothin' but 'web-foot.' But here's supper, Colonel; you all take it while it's hot. I know you needs it wuss than I do the shoes."

"I don't know about that, Kinsey; in the morning I will see our quartermaster and get him to exchange with some other quartermaster and secure you a good pair of shoes, for every man in this command must be well protected from this weather if I can secure that protection."

Laurens, and marching orders cannot come too soon for me. The war is fast approaching the end, and, as the fox hunters say, 'I want to be in at the death.' "

"We shall have marching orders next week, Paisly; a Pennsylvania brigade goes to General Greene, and other detachments with them, including your squadron. The French army will remain for the present in Virginia under Count Rochambeau, while the remainder of our army will march northward to the Hudson, for the dying efforts of King George will be made in and around New York."

"The surrender at Yorktown is the beginning of the end, Laurens. We shall have some more partizan warfare in North and South Carolina, but King George is whipped. The British lion must take his paws off of American sod, from the Great Lakes southward, from the Atlantic westward, and I see the dawn coming of a glorious day for these colonies."

"So mote it be, Paisly; I am young yet, but, if the surrender of my poor life would hasten the dawn of our independence, I should willingly follow Luke Stallings's example. Sacrifice is the price of liberty."

"There are more of us that would do likewise, my dear Laurens, but let us hope that we shall all survive the final struggle and be left to aid in the upbuilding of a great country. But the evening is now far spent, we had better be going now, Charley."

"Don't go. I can bunk both of you for the night," insisted Colonel Laurens.

"Many thanks, John Laurens, but Charley has made too many luxurious preparations for my return for me to spend even one night away from so sumptuous a marquee. You must come over and see our abode, and take a meal prepared by Mike Kinsey, our 'chef de

cuisine.' Suppose you come to-morrow and spend the day?"

"I know of nothing to prevent, Paisly, so look for me."

Marching orders came the following week. On the march southward Paisly and Laurens saw much of each other and their friendship grew warm and tender, not unlike the beautiful example given in Jewish history of the love that was so nobly exhibited by David and Jonathan.

Ambition and jealousy found no sordid place in the hearts of these young patriots; each gave his best service to the cause both so faithfully loved and served, and the successes of one only called forth loving admiration from the other. Laurens was given a position of leadership from his familiarity with the territory over which they were fighting in South Carolina, and he always sought to have with him Paisly and his squadron in any desperate venture he was about to make.

The character of the warfare waged was sudden dashes upon exposed outposts of the British, and the squadron commanded by Paisly carried terror into the ranks of their enemies, for they were soon found to be hard fighters, expert with the sword, and so swift in their movements as not only to avoid much of the hazard in attack, but inspired panic by their impetuosity.

It was in one of these expeditions that Paisly and Colonel Laurens led in an impetuous charge, finding the enemy more stubborn in resistance than usual. As the squadron advanced, Paisly on his black charger and Laurens, also well mounted, led the flying column as they bore down upon the sullen, waiting foe.

"Paisly," said Laurens, as side by side they dashed

forward, "there is no death to a Christian patriot; we only pass from the battle fields of earth to the glories of eternity; what is a human life to the liberties of my people?"

"You are brave and true, my dear Laurens, but do not be reckless; do not throw your life away."

There was a sudden rushing together, a clash of steel, a roar of firearms, a neighing of wounded steeds, the mingled shouts of battle, and for a time all was smoke, din and confusion. Above the roar three voices were heard and the battle cry was, "Strike! strike! strike! for your wives, your children, your homes!" Then only two voices lifted the cry, but above them was heard the roar of Mike Kinsey, like the voice of an enraged lion, and a rift in the smoke revealed him standing over the prostrate form of Colonel Laurens, his sword whizzing and flashing, while around him lay in a circle dead and dying men, while none of the enemy now dared approach him. Paisly had pressed onward with the main body of his men, Charley Sheering leading the way, and soon the enemy were seen flying, eager to escape the devouring sword, their fears being swifter than the pursuing horsemen.

"We have punished them sufficiently, Charley," said Colonel Paisly. "Where is Mike Kinsey? Let him sound the rally."

"I fear some mishap has befallen Kinsey, Colonel."

"Have you seen anything of Colonel Laurens since we joined battle, Charley?"

"Not since the first crash, Colonel, and I venture we will find Mike looking after Colonel Laurens."

Slowly and carefully did they retrace their steps to the spot where the battle had first begun, and there, beneath a stunted pine near a branch of cool, running

water, they found Colonel Laurens sorely wounded, with his head resting upon the breast of Mike Kinsey, while all around lay the victims Mike had cut down in defence of the colonel. Paisly dispatched Charley Sheering in search of Surgeon Carmichael, and, taking a seat by the side of his beloved friend, he took his hand in his, saying, "How do you feel, my dear Laurens? I trust your wound is not serious."

" 'Tis mortal, friend Paisly; an artery is severed, and I shall soon sleep among those who, like Luke Stallings, in the prime of their young manhood died for their country."

"Here comes Carmichael, John; let us hope he will find a way to save you. Oh, we cannot give you up, my more than friend," and manly tears came into Paisly's eyes.

The serious face of Doctor Carmichael as he examined the wounded man spoke but too plainly, and no one saw it more quickly than Colonel Laurens. With a sweet smile on his placid face, he said, "I see you think I am not long for earth, Doctor; I realize it. That ball severed the femoral artery. Life is fast ebbing, and I shall soon join the great majority. I have no fears; life would have been sweet, eternal life will be far sweeter."

"You have anticipated me, Colonel Laurens; your hours on earth are numbered, but I see you have no fears for the future, and the knowledge of the fact does not hasten your going," was Carmichael's calm reply. "But let us remove you from this gruesome place," continued the doctor. "I have ordered a stretcher, and here it comes. We will take the colonel to yon house in the distance, Kinsey."

With tender hands and tearful eyes they bore the

dying colonel to a more comfortable place than a battle field, and surounded by those comrades who loved and tenderly ministered to him, he passed from scenes of suffering and strife into the land where death shall never come. His last words were "Sacrifice is the price of liberty."

CHAPTER XXII

FANNING LOSES THE BAY DOE

We now pass over the winter and resume our story in the summer days of 1782. While the King's cause had steadily failed, his forces having been driven out of the Carolinas and his army at Yorktown having surrendered, David Fanning had lost none of his venom, and continued to wage a relentless war upon the best citizens of the province, selecting those who were representative men. The counties of Chatham, Randolph, and the edge of Guilford furnished the chosen victims, and, regardless of law, either military or civil, his marauders carried fire and sword into the homes of many supporters of the Continental cause; and good men were either shot or hanged with as little show of feeling as if they had been dogs, while women and children, escaping for their lives from their burning homes, often sought refuge in the forests and swamps or in the cabins of their faithful slaves.

On one of his plundering expeditions Fanning and a few faithful followers met on one of the highways leading southward toward the Pee Dee settlement in South Carolina, a cart with a covering of homespun cloth, and driven by a man who was little disposed to talk, and who, evidently, was not pleased at meeting the Tory leader.

"Where are you going?" was Fanning's gruff question as he halted man and cart.

"Down on Pee Dee to buy some salt and groceries; my family are suffering for 'em right now."

"Have ye got anything to eat in this cart?" and Fanning, having dismounted, proceeded to lift the cover and to stir up a pile of sacks.

"Only a few rations to last the journey, Colonel; for God's sake don't take 'em."

"Hello, you have got some live rations in here," and Fanning lifted some sacks and discovered beneath them a man. Fanning's face now lighted with a devilish smile as he exclaimed, "Come out, you rascal; I have caught you at last. Ah, Hunter, did you ever expect to escape me?"

Andrew Hunter was a true patriot, and the enmity he bore Fanning and the king's cause was of long standing, and he was on the black list that Fanning had sworn to put to the sword or gibbet. "Yea, they have been trying and hanging my men at Pittsboro as traitors, Hunter. The battle of Cane Creek cost me Jack Rains and a bad wound in my arm, and now vengeance is mine, so you may get ready in fifteen minutes to die. You rebels need not think ye are going to win out, even if Cornwallis and Rawdon are defeated. There are enough of the King's men in this province to crush out rebellion, and sich as you will dance on air whenever I catch ye."

"Colonel Fanning, I am in your power, and am helpless to defend myself. I have fought you in the field, always a fair fight, and have never yet hung one of your men. Of course, if I am to die, I would prefer to die like a soldier."

"I think I would prefer to see you dance on air; so, boys, make ready to send Hunter to kingdom come by way of hemp."

There was considerable stir among Fanning's men, for several of them knew Hunter, and, with the exception of his being a Whig, had always liked him. His friend with whom he was journeying to the Pee Dee, Latham by name, put in an earnest plea for him, regardless of personal danger to himself.

Walking up to Fanning, he said, "Colonel, you are goin' to commit nothing short of murder. Hunter is a brave enemy, and deserves better of you than to be hung like a dog. If ye will kill him, shoot him, but don't, for God's sake, strangle him."

"Ye had better keep quiet," replied Fanning; "you are in bad company, and 'twouldn't take much of your tongue to send you after Hunter."

"Can't help it, Colonel; Hunter is my friend and neighbor; he has a helpless family."

"The families of all sich had better die out; they are a nest of rebels," said Fanning, as he turned to speak to the man whom he had appointed chief hangman.

"Find your limb; there is no need to delay; hasten this business and let us be going."

The members of the troop had all dismounted, and Fanning's famous mare, the bay Doe, was picketed not far from the spot where Hunter and the executioner stood. Hunter gazed with longing eyes at the trim, deerlike mare as she stood beneath the shade only a few yards away, and inwardly determined that no hemp should strangle the life out of him when he had a chance for his life, or at least a chance to die like a soldier. He delayed the hanging by prolonging his talk with the man appointed to do the job, and as they talked, Hunter steadily and almost imperceptibly moved backward in the direction of the bay Doe.

"It's no use," replied the man; "I would be glad to see you released, Hunter, but the colonel is mad at the loss of some of his men, and I can see you are doomed; I am sorry."

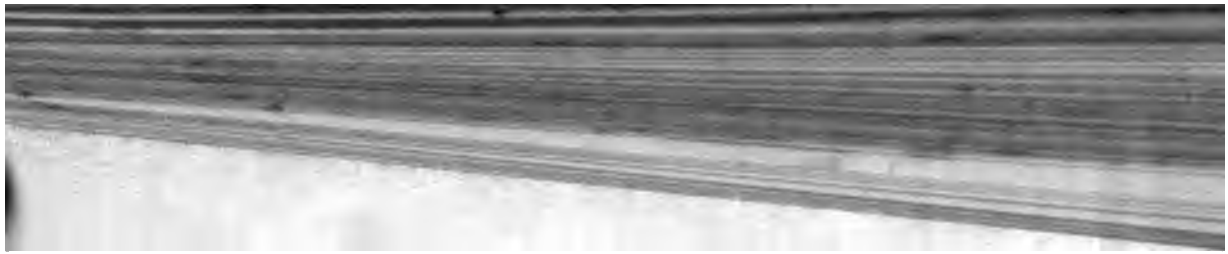
"But tell him that every Whig he hangs means a dreadful retribution to him when we force him to surrender. He will be outlawed in every province." Meanwhile, Hunter had crept several yards nearer to the bay Doe.

"No use, Hunter, to tell the colonel anything; he's bent on hangin' yer, and it's much as my life's worth not to tie the rope, and I've got it here all fixed and the colonel is awaitin', so don't put it off any longer."

With a sudden spring and a rush, Hunter reached the bay Doe, and, catching her bridle off of the swinging limb over which it had been carelessly thrown, he bounded on her back. Reluctant to leave the other horses, the mare for a moment refused to move, but the crack of several rifles as their balls cut the twigs about her caused her to spring like a startled hare, and soon she was flying with almost incredible speed down the road in a southern direction, leaving Fanning to find a mount until he could once more reach the Red buck, for he realized that pursuit was vain, as no other horse in the troop could possibly overtake the bay Doe; nothing but a bullet could. "Shoot him, shoot him," exclaimed Fanning. "Kill the rascal, but don't kill my horse. She's worth a dozen sich as he."

On sped the bay Doe, bullet after bullet following Hunter, but one reaching the mark, as all feared injury to the mare. A stream of blood flowing down the saddle and foreshoulder of the mare, and a stinging sensation in his own thigh, told Hunter that he had been struck. Regardless of his wound, on he rode, putting

Fanning Loses the Bay Doe



many miles between him and his bloodthirsty enemies before he dared to halt or seek aid. At last, turning the head of the bay Doe into a dark bridle path through a dense forest of long leaf pine, he rode briskly forward until the path broadened out and he came to a clearing on the edge of which stood a double log cabin with a picket fence of rived boards around it.

Sitting on the top rider of the rail fence that surrounded a field adjoining the house inclosure was a red-faced, red-haired man, with plenty of freckles and a big mouth, clad in buckskin breeches, bare-footed, without coat or waistcoat, his only upper garment a deerskin hunting shirt, and holding across his knees a long barrel rifle, he was a picture of the primitive settler. In a moment he had jumped from the top rail, and when Hunter flung the bridle of the bay Doe over a picket and slowly dismounted, the owner of the settlement held out his hand, saying, "Glad to see ye, Hunter; ye mon ha' rode far the day; the mare ese all in a reek."

"I have been riding for my life, Sandy MacPherson, and have a bullet in my right thigh, so you may try your skill at probing when I get a little rested."

"Who has been chasin' ye, Hunter?"

"The Fanning gang, Sandy; I was on my way to Pee Dee to buy supplies for my family, when who should overtake us but Fanning and his murderous gang. They fixed a rope and got all ready to hang me, but Fanning's mare was too convenient for me to amuse them by strangulation. I jumped upon her back, and, running the gauntlet of the whole gang, only received one shot. This, Sandy, is the bay Doe, and Fanning will never see her again, I assure you."

Sandy MacPherson clapped his hands in great glee,

and opening his big mouth exclaimed, "Well done, Hunter. Fannin' found his match, the rascal, ar' precious rascal. Ter Devil must ha' Fannin', but Sandy MacPherson would be liking the job to send him to hell. Did ee see ma brother Duncan wi' Fannin', Hunter?"

"Yes, Duncan was with him, Sandy, but I believe he was my friend and would have tried to save me had he thought it worth while to try."

"Na, na, Duncan's no goot, Hunter; oot on ony mon would foul his ane nest, would feicht his ane hame folk when t'ey only pe wanting to ha' their ane. I want no more to see Duncan; he's a Tory, a Tory. Carolina is t'e only country I know an' love, but come in, Hunter, ma lass will give ye bite and sup."

Elspeth MacPherson was a comely Scotch woman of robust type with hair of golden bronze and big brown eyes, ruddy round cheeks and a smiling mouth that dimly displayed a double row of handsome, pearly teeth. Her husband was known throughout their settlement as the big, ugly MacPherson, while she was greatly beloved and bore the name of Honey MacPherson, because of her loving nature and sweet, sunny temper. She came to the door of the cabin just as Sandy and Hunter approached it, and seeing the bloody breeches and halting step of Hunter, exclaimed, "Oh, Mr. Hunter; you pe wounded. Sandy, carry Mr. Hunter into our room and get him to bed; we can then see what is the best thing to do for him."

Hunter soon took off his outer garments, and Sandy carefully bathed the wound, which was through the fleshy part of his thigh, the ball having lodged in the bone, and then proceeded to exercise a little skill which

he had attained by long practice, and, using a probe of his own making, soon located the ball.

"T'ey plugged you goot, Hunter; take a swig at t'e bottle and I will dig out t'at ball. When t'at ese out, Honey will haf you something to eat."

The rough-looking Scotch amateur surgeon was very gentle and tender, and it did not take him long to dislodge the ball and to draw it carefully out to the surface along the track of the wound, exclaiming, "T'ere now; t'ese out. I will bathe and dress ter wound, and then you eat something and go to sleep. Honey, Honey, fetch Hunter something." Quick to respond, Elspeth brought in a substantial meal, and Hunter, having satisfied his hunger, was soon overcome by exhaustion and sank into quiet slumber.

"Sandy," said Elspeth, as they sat by the cookroom ingle, "Sandy, 'tis brutal, this shooting honest folk on ter highways; why does not some one kill Fanning?"

"Why does not some one kill ter devil, Honey? Fannin' will soon have ter leave t'e province or we will hunt him down like ter wolf he pe; yet he kills many of t'e best people; he purns parnes and houses. Just to think, Honey, my own brother Duncan ese in t'at beesness with Fannin'; he should never see wife or home more; he petter not see Sandy MacPherson any more."

"Never harm your ane brither Duncan, Sandy; he is your ane bluid, bad though he be. He will find a hame elsewhere when t'e fighting es over, for this settlement will not be a neighborly place ter him."

"Ant he go away, Sandy MacPherson will not harm him, put love him any more I never shall, Honey. Hese hand is red wi' bluid, and tese t'e bluid o' kindred, neighbors; shame on him."

Hunter slept soundly through the night and was too

sore and weak to arise, although he was awake by early dawn. "How pe you t'is morn, Hunter?" questioned Sandy as with the soft tread of an Indian he entered the room.

"I am very sore, Sandy; that thigh is as yet quite useless; but a little bathing and a few days of rest will doubtless give me the use of two legs again."

"T'e pay Doe ese gaily t'is morn; she runs like t'e wind, takes her oats and maize lively."

"I am glad her ladyship is so spry, Sandy, and I think she will be worth my getting shot, for it's an ill wind blows no one good luck."

"If dat devil Fanning will let your hame pe, 'twould pe a good trade, Hunter, put I fear he will take vengeance on helpless folk; ter devil!"

"True, true, Sandy; and I am almost afraid to hear from wife and children."

"He will take t'e niggers, too, Hunter, an' purn what he'll no' carry awa'. Fannin' is t'e devil. When you can ride, you go on to Pee Dee ant get yer groceries. I will tak' a few neighbors ant look after your folk; if Fannin' comes in our way, somepody will pe dead."

At this moment the bright face of Honey MacPherson illumined the doorway, and her cheery voice was like music. "You'll no' pe getting up, Mr. Hunter, but breakfast is ready and I have brought you a bite and some fresh milk."

"He maun ha' t'e nip first, Honey; where's t'e plack pottle?" said Sandy.

"Mayhap Mr. Hunter thinks no' so much o' the nip as you do, Sandy, but a wee drop o' whiskey would help him. So the black bottle is not far awa'," and with smiling face and brisk step Honey MacPherson went to fetch it.

"T'at looks lak comfort, Honey," said Sandy as his wife appeared, black bottle in hand. "Now, Hunter, take a good swig, it will warm yer bluid, and you will eat t'e venison broil lak well folk."

"I ha' a rival, Mr. Hunter," said Elspeth with a smile. "Sandy loves t'at black bottle almost as weel as his wife, an' sometimes I fear he loves it too weel."

"Na, na, Honey, no fear; was ter plack pottle ter poke hese ugly mow atween us, Honey, tese good-bye; a should smash it ag'in' yon big pine tree." And Elspeth knew that Sandy had Scotch tenacity enough to do as he said, and was comforted.

While Hunter found shelter with Sandy and Elspeth MacPherson and soon became well enough to resume his journey to the Pee Dee, the venom of Fanning guided him to Hunter's home, and in revenge for the loss of the bay Doe he desolated that home, carrying away wife, children and slaves; sending a message to Hunter that when the bay Doe was returned he might have them back again. Hunter kept the mare. Many were the tribulations of the Hunters before their final reunion, and they were greatly indebted to the MacPhersons for friendly shelter when homeless. Hunter finally removed to the Pee Dee country, and there became a prosperous citizen of the young republic. The bay Doe and her descendants became famous for their speed and quality throughout the Pee Dee, and even to-day there are fine horses in South and North Carolina that claim, through their owners, the blood of the bay Doe; blood that is far purer and carries with it higher qualities than that of David Fanning.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

The months of the year 1782 dragged slowly along, and while David Fanning's power was fast waning, and the close of that year found him without a British soldier in the Carolinas to encourage him in his nefarious endeavors, Daddy Scurlock and Aunt Mandy had been afraid to bring Polly Rutherford back to Skin Quarter, for occasional raids were made into the Brush Creek settlement, each outrage, however, tending to convert the weak and timorous, to making stronger the Whig following. In Guilford, Tory influence had greatly weakened, and the people around Alamance and Buffalo churches had the prospect before them of spending a peaceful Christmas, and were greatly rejoicing over the bright outlook for a return of peace, and the expected homecoming of many fathers and brothers who for months had been in the field. Christmas eve dawned dark and gloomy, the wind was tossing the branches of the oaks surrounding the parsonage, and whirling the leaves about, piling them in the fence corners and again scattering them with an angry blast. Soon the snow began to fall, and there was a promise of a storm that should bury the old year in a white shroud, with enough of white left to enfold the baby form of the new year in snowy garments.

"Oh, how it snows, Aunt Rachel," exclaimed Polly

Rutherford. "I do wonder if any of our poor soldiers are on the road in this storm." Polly was standing by a little window that looked out on the wild scene, in the direction of the walkway from the front gate; in striking contrast was it to the warm, cheerful chamber of Mrs. Caldwell. "And to think, too, Aunt Rachel," she continued, "Uncle Caldwell has to come home this afternoon from Mr. Gordon's."

"It is a stormy day indeed, Polly, and while we should be lonely to-night without Uncle Caldwell, I had rather for his comfort that he stayed all night at Brother Gordon's, than to have him come home through this freezing blast. We should thank the Master of the storm that we, and those who look to us for protection and comfort, are safely housed. Even our cattle, sheep and pigs are safe in byre, fold and pen, and there is food and warmth for all. May our soldiers fare as well as we, but I fear some of them are 'in the cauld blast.' "

"Did not Aunt Patsy Gordon tell us on last Sunday, Aunt Rachel, that our troop would soon come home now?"

"Yea, Sister Patsy hath been looking for Colonel Paisly by Christmastide, and this is the eve of that day. Child, I would they could have reached Rafe Gordon's or our house before this storm, for 'tis going to be a fearsome spell, I trow."

"He tempereth the wind, Aunt Rachel, and while the storm is awesome, our soldiers are so brave, so hardy. They mind not what we poor womenfolk would shrink from facing, yet I would gladly see them under shelter to-night."

"What hour doth the clock say, Polly? It hath turned so dark 'tis like twilight."

"Only two o'clock, Aunt Rachel; night will settle

upon us before five," and Polly placed on the wide fireplace a few fat pieces of lightwood that sent a ruddy glow into the darkest corner of the room, dispelling gloom and enabling her to resume a bit of fine ruffle work she had been doing. The two women sat silently by the bright fire for awhile, the only sounds being the light tap of some half-frozen flakes against the windows, the roar of the blazing fire within, of the tempest without, and the click of Aunt Rachel's needles as she sat knitting. Polly Rutherford was clad in a close-fitting gown of glossy black homespun, with Irish linen cuffs and collar of snowy whiteness. The gown had been woven and dyed in Aunt Rachel's weaving room, and presented to her by Aunt Rachel soon after Luke's death. With it she always wore linen collars and cuffs of her own making. Her fair skin, bright color, shining hair like a golden sunset, and violet eyes would have made her beautiful at any time, but the black gown was exceedingly becoming, too, and seemed to enhance every attraction she possessed. There was a tender shade of sadness about her expressive mouth, a sadness born of an early sorrow that made her lovable indeed. Looking up from her knitting, Aunt Rachel said, while a sweet smile lighted her face, "You look very winsome, my child; black is a becoming color to you. You have become very dear to me and to the doctor, Polly, and it will be hard the giving you up. How Mandy has spared you all these months I know not; you will never know, child, what it has cost her."

"No one will ever know how I grieve for mammy, Aunt Rachel, and, but for the tender love you and Uncle Caldwell have lavished upon me, I should have wept my heart out. It seems like an age since I left Skin Quarter, and"—Polly's voice trembled—"like

years since that dreadful night when dear Luke lay dead before my eyes in Aunt Patsy's drawing-room. I should look faded, not winsome, Aunt Rachel."

"Put aside your ruffling, Polly darling, and come to me. I wish to have your loving kiss and to feel those arms about me, and to talk to you; we are all alone this stormy day, the younger folk are entertaining themselves."

Polly Rutherford laid down the work, and, coming to Aunt Rachel, was soon enfolded in her arms, and with a sob sheltered her sunny head upon the heart that knew so well how to brighten and comfort her young life. Returning Polly's kiss, Aunt Rachel said tenderly, "The dews of divine grace have prevented thee from fading, my child; and the Father, I trow, hath yet bright days for thee."

"Had I been less cruel to Luke, Aunt Rachel, my grief at his loss would be less painful. I know not why girls should so often give to true hearts needless pain. I learned Luke's true value after his noble life had been quenched in death."

"Thou art not alone in that, my child; our tongues often inflict wounds deeper than the sword. But comfort thine heart, darling; thy last words to Luke were tender and a prayer for his safe return. God, who is wise in all His ways, demanded of Luke and of you a sacrifice, and now we must all strive to say from the heart, 'Thy will be done.' Not now, but in the better land we shall see the reason for it all."

"I do not doubt that, Aunt Rachel, but our hearts must be sore in receiving such a wound as I did; I loved Luke more truly than I thought."

"I know thine heart is sore, my child, but, realizing a Father's hand in the affliction, thou shouldst find much

comfort in submission. In His own time He will heal; you are young; in all probability you have a long life before you, and your loving heart may yet carry sunshine into some other life; some other home."

Polly Rutherford's tear-stained cheeks flushed as she sadly shook her head, saying, "I know 'never' is a long word, but, Aunt Rachel, I do not feel now as if I ever wanted a home of my own. I had rather dwell with mammy, and when I want a change I shall always have a home with you and Uncle Caldwell."

"Always, my child; and gladly will we ever keep thee as long as we can. I have a hope, my child, that when thou dost have a home of thy own that it will be near us; I know some one else who hopes so, too, Polly."

"Oh, Aunt Rachel."

"Remember, child, I would not have thee cherish less the memory of Luke Stallings, for he was worthy, but a heart so young, so bright and winning as thine cannot live on through the years loving only the dead. It may become thy duty, thy privilege, to have thy heart again filled with a living love; if so, do not cast it from thee; that would be ungrateful to the great Giver."

"Can a new love so entirely dispossess an old love, Aunt Rachel?"

"Nay, my child; the old love is a holy thing that keeps its own place in the heart; we never cease to love our dead. The newer love is a separate growth, but it may be as noble, as true, as tender, as the old love, and may make our lives very beautiful, very happy. Be restfully calm, my child, and follow the leadings of thy Heavenly Father's hand."

During the conversation the storm had increased and the real twilight had thickened until, as the servants

passed from the house to the kitchen or moved about in performing the needed duties about the place, they could be seen only as a dim shadow, and the night promised to be dark and dreary.

"Let me make up our fire again, Aunt Rachel," said Polly, arising from the snug shelter in Mrs. Caldwell's arms. "Should Uncle Caldwell come home this evening, we must have a bright light and a good fire to welcome and warm him. How often have I looked for the light from the window, as in the twilight I neared my own home, Aunt Rachel, and the glow of it always warmed my heart and quickened my steps." While Polly laid on the sticks Mrs. Caldwell lighted candles, and placed a lard-oil lamp on the oval candle stand, so that its light should shine through the window and along the path from the gate to the porch. "Now we only await Uncle's coming, Aunt Rachel," said Polly as they again gathered around the warm ingle.

"We have not long to wait, Polly darling; I hear the doctor calling Ben. What a dreadful ride he must have had, and in the reflected light from the window upon the snow I think I see two men with him."

"Yes, there are two, Aunt Rachel."

Through the deep drifts the three waded to the porch, and by heavy stamping and shaking succeeded in getting rid of huge piles of snow; then the doctor opened the door from the porch into the front entry and followed Colonel Paisly and Lieutenant Sowell into the house, where they were met by Mrs. Caldwell and Polly Rutherford.

"Thou wert brave, David, to face the storm to-night, but thou hadst good company. Welcome, Colonel Paisly; welcome, Lieutenant Sowell; come into my room, gentlemen. But here is a lass that would greet both

of you." Polly extended her hand to Colonel Paisly, saying, "A glad homecoming to you, Colonel." Then turning, gave Joel Sowell a hearty hand clasp, saying, "I am glad for you and for Roxy, too, that you returned in safety."

Soon they were all seated in Aunt Rachel's chamber, the bright fire melting the snow from those bearded soldiers, and warmed them into a cheerful and thankful mood as they chatted with the doctor and Polly, for Aunt Rachel had gone to hasten a hot supper.

Colonel Paisly took a seat near Polly and took an early opportunity to thank her for her cheery welcome. "My homecoming is a glad one, Miss Polly Rutherford, for I can return with honor, my country no longer needing my services in the field. Now I shall see what Providence and duty have in store for me. I shall return to an impoverished farm, and must labor with mine own head and hands to rebuild my shattered fortunes and to help my neighbors, but I have so much to be thankful for I should not repine. Why He has spared me and taken two of my dearest friends I know not, but surely the Lord has still some good use for me." The earnest face of Colonel Paisly wore a sad and sober expression as he spoke, and his lips parted into a faint smile as he gazed into Polly's face.

"I do not doubt that the Lord has some noble work for you, Colonel; He has work for us all, and He gives us ability according to our need. Your dear mother will be greatly comforted to have you home again, and I am sure you can be of great service to the people among whom you dwell. Aunt Rachel says we may never know the 'Why' of God's dealings until we reach the better land."

"My idea of life, Miss Polly Rutherford, is living

for others. That is a poor life that is bounded by the sphere of self. I would like some time to talk with you about ideal living; I am sure you could appreciate the views I should advance, for they are founded on Holy Writ. But returning to the present, I would ask if you thought of returning home early in the new year?"

"I have not heard from home for nearly two months, Colonel; but now that the war is nearly over, I should not be surprised to see daddy ride up to the gate any day. In her last letter mammy said she must have me home in January if there was an opportunity to get me a suitable escort."

"I am not serving my own interests by the suggestion, Miss Polly Rutherford, for I don't want to see you go, but Joel Sowell, Charley Sheering, and the other soldiers from Brush Creek will be going home as soon as this storm is over and the roads get passable. For a few days they will remain at Uncle Rafe Gordon's, and here, waiting on the roads, then they will depart. Should you wish to accompany them, I will volunteer as your special escort and take the best of care of you."

"Thank you most kindly, Colonel; I shall be governed in my homeward movements by what Uncle Caldwell thinks best, in the event that daddy does not come before the Brush Creek boys depart. But with so many home people to care for me, would it not be a trespass on your valuable time for you to take that long journey now?"

"And does Miss Polly Rutherford think it would be no pleasure to me to take that journey for her sake? Unless you forbid my going, I shall certainly go to Skin Quarter when you do."

"Oh, I shall not forbid your going, Colonel, and am grateful that you deem so tedious a journey a pleasure, so we will talk further about that later. I see Aunt Rachel is coming to tell us that supper is ready," and with a sweet smile and roses in her cheeks, Polly arose and led the way to the dining room.

During supper Colonel Paisly and Lieutenant Sowell gave a thrilling account of their recent experiences in South Carolina, and the colonel told the sad story of the heroic death of his beloved friend, Colonel John Laurens. "His dying words are immortal, John Paisly," said Doctor Caldwell. "It is true indeed that 'sacrifice is the price of liberty,' and it is through the vicarious offering of those whose lives have been surrendered on more than a hundred battlefields that we who survive shall inherit religious and civil freedom."

"Now, doctor, it remains to be seen that we be found worthy of this great trust," said Paisly.

"True indeed, John; we pass from a state of war into the formative period, and it will take wisdom, statesmanship, patriotism and unselfishness to evolve a sweet and wholesome freedom out of our conditions. God will guide us if we only seek Him."

"Did you hear, John, that congress marched in a body to church to thank God for the great victory at Yorktown?"

"Ah, that was glorious. It was a fitting tribute of thanks to the source of all victory."

"I heard it, doctor, and from that moment I felt that our liberties were assured. 'If God be for us, who can be against us?' and now every true man should give his best services to the upbuilding of our waste places, to helping our religious and moral education, to securing the best form of representative civil government. Ill

fares the land that is sunken in ignorance and has no God."

"Would that all our young men were Godfearing men, John Paisly, then the task before us would be simple. But our French allies have brought with them to our shores strange gods, and many young and ambitious men among us are deifying the god of reason or goddess of liberty. There is no safety in any government by the people unless that people recognize and strive to serve the only God. Let us go to the throne of grace and ask for wisdom and strength in this crucial time," and Doctor Caldwell, receiving from Polly Rutherford's hand the old family Bible, read the 46th Psalm, his deep tones uttering those soul-thrilling words, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." Then in his tender way he brought all the cares and troubles that encompassed his people, his friends, his own heart and home, to the Mighty Helper, with a faith that brought comfort and peace.

The storm still raged, and promised to last for many hours. The little company gathered after prayers around the cheerful fire in Aunt Rachel's room, and so much was there to talk about and so swiftly passed the moments the clock was striking eleven before a thought was given to seeking needed rest. Doctor Caldwell walked to the little window from whence the friendly light still streamed out upon the deep snowdrifts between the house and the gate, and, looking out, seemed to be listening very intently.

"Hark!" he exclaimed. "I hear some one calling. Surely some poor wayfarer is out in this storm." And going into the entry he threw open the front door and met a cutting, snow-laden blast. "Who is there?" he called.

"A traveler who has lost his way. I am looking for the home of David Caldwell."

"I know that voice. 'Tis some one I should know. This is David Caldwell's, come in." And the doctor stepped out into a drift nearly up to his waist, and struggled down the walk to meet the traveler.

"And this is David Caldwell; have ye not a lass o' mine here? I have been wandering about the roads in this dreadful storm and fortunately saw that friendly light."

"Bless your dear soul, it is Amen Scurlock. My dear friend, come in out of the storm. Ben, Ben, come take Mr. Scurlock's horse and give him warm shelter and plenty of corn and fodder."

The half-frozen form of Amen Scurlock was a mass of snow, and his limbs, stiff and numb, moved slowly as he followed Doctor Caldwell into the entry. Then removing his outer wraps, he was taken into Aunt Rachel's warm chamber to receive most hearty greetings. Polly Rutherford could scarcely believe her own eyes as Daddy Scurlock walked in; then, with a cry of delight, her arms were about his neck and tears streaming down her rosy cheeks as she exclaimed, "Oh, daddy, daddy, my dear old daddy! how delighted I am to see you. But you are nearly frozen, poor daddy," and with her soft warm hands she chafed his stiff and icy fingers.

"My sweet lass, old daddy is very cold, but his heart is warm, and I am precious glad to see my darling gal. How well ye look; surely Sister Rachel and Brother Caldwell have nurtured thee well."

"Aunt Rachel and Uncle Caldwell are my other daddy and mammy, my dearest daddy, and this is my other home; am I not rich?"

"Verily thou art, child; but Skin Quarter is desolate without thee, and Mandy is grieving sore at thy long absence."

"Dear old mammy! I must go to her, daddy, so soon as this dreadful storm passes, and the roads are such as we can travel. But I am selfish, daddy; here is Colonel Paisly, Joel Sowell and Aunt Rachel, all waiting to welcome you."

Aunt Rachel was the first to assure Daddy Scurlock of a hearty welcome. "The night is so stormy, Brother Scurlock, thou mightst have frozen out in the cold blast. God be praised that thou didst reach warm shelter."

"It was the light that saved me, Sister Rachel; I followed it for nearly a mile. Bless God for that light."

" 'Tis ever my custom, Brother Scurlock, to place the lamp near that window on stormy nights; it looks cheerful from the outside, and hath brought to shelter more than one traveler before to-night."

"I have watched for it many a night," said Colonel Paisly. "I am glad indeed it brought you safely out of the storm, Mr. Scurlock, and it is an object lesson. We should all let our light shine out upon a darkened world of sin."

"Very true, Colonel; and here now is my old friend and neighbor, Joel Sowell; he has a bright light and a shining little tupenny rushlight waitin' for him at Skin Quarter. Joel, you just ought to see Roxy and little Tony Scurlock. He can talk right sharp, and says often to me, 'Daddy, Tory mean.' " The lids of Joel's eyes were moist as he grasped Daddy Scurlock's hand, and his voice trembled as he said, "My wife and baby are indeed lights to guide me home, Daddy Scur-

lock, and I shall try and live my gratitude to you for your fatherly care of them."

"Hush, boy; Roxy and Tony are child and grandchild to me."

"This is all very pleasant, indeed," said Doctor Caldwell, "if there were no morning, but Christmas morning will soon be here, and I am sure all our travelers need sleep. Brother Scurlock needs warm drink and a bite of something substantial; a little something more would not hurt any of us this cold night."

Aunt Rachel had provided for just what she knew was needed, and, after another visit to the dining room, the guests were shown by Doctor Caldwell to warm rooms and comfortable goose-down beds, and were soon sleeping soundly regardless of the storm that raged around them.

Christmas morning dawned and still the storm did not abate; the wildness of the early morning being almost equal to the darker hours of night. Doctor Caldwell was stirring with the earliest streak of light, and found Ben and three of the plantation hands digging paths through the snowdrifts to the kitchen, dairy, barn and stables, and there was some one else at work with them in the dim dawn light.

"Why, Brother Scurlock, what are you doing out here?"

"Shovelin' snow," was the quaint reply. "It's fine work; sets yer blood a-goin'; I shall have a fine appetite for my breakfast."

"Come along, let the men finish that work, brother, and we will take a turn through the stables and see how the horses are faring."

"They are fed long ago, Brother Caldwell, and have warm shelter; my nag is a little the worse for her bout

with the storm, but takes the feed kindly and only needs rest."

"That she is likely to get, Brother Scurlock, for the roads will be quite impassable for at least two weeks; you should wait until a track is well broken."

"I shall have to, and even then there are swollen streams to cross and bridges to mend as we go, for this thaw will be dreadful. I must get ahead of the thaw if possible."

As they passed near the stall of Dapple, she heard the voice of her old master and gave a whinny of recognition, and he could not resist her call.

"She knows you," said the doctor.

"I should think so. Dapple, come here." And the gray beauty turned in her stall and lovingly rested her head upon Amen Scurlock's shoulder, then thrust her nose into his huge coat pocket.

"Up to old tricks, gal! What did ye find?" as Dapple began munching something. "Ha! I had a few ginger cakes in my pocket and she has found them. She is a knowin' creatur', Brother Caldwell, and we were just afraid to keep her in Chatham as long as Fanning's gang were about; they would certainly have stolen her and her mistress, too. We owe you a debt we can never pay, Brother Caldwell."

"Tut, tut, man; speak no more in that fashion. Polly Rutherford is as dear to Rachel and to me as our own children. What we are to do when you take her away we do not know; it is we that are indebted to you. But hark, I hear the summons to worship; we shall find them all astir when we get to the house."

"A blessed Christmas to all!" exclaimed Doctor Caldwell as he followed Amen Scurlock into the drawing-room, now well warmed by a light wood log fire.

"A happy, a joyous Christmas to all!" exclaimed Polly, "and a Christmas kiss to my dear old daddy."

"I want one, too, Polly darling," cried the doctor.

"You shall have it, uncle. Aunt Rachel has already received hers," said Polly merrily, while Colonel Paisly, looking ruefully at Joel Sowell, exclaimed, "We are left in the cold, Joel; there don't seem to be kisses enough to go around."

Polly blushingly replied, "A kiss, Colonel, is spontaneous combustion, occasioned by the contact of certain subtle currents in human nature. No contact, no combustion; no combustion, no kiss."

"Ah, that is very clear to the man in the moon, Miss Polly Rutherford, but Joel and I are not responsible for the no contact; we must only hope for a favorable change in the subtle currents."

It was a joyous Christmas, notwithstanding the stormy weather, for the inmates of the Caldwell home were congenial, and their host and hostess enjoyed having them fully as much as they did the social commingling from day to day. The forenoon of the day after Christmas brought them first a few glimpses of sunshine and then the winds bore away the dark clouds on their wings, and revealed the blue sky in all its gorgeous beauty and the bright shining of a brilliant sun. One of the first signs of life on the highways was the arrival of Holiday with a message from Aunt Patsy Gordon. Poking his head in at the kitchen door, Holiday asked Ben, who was patiently waiting on the cook for his dinner, "Whar Miss Rachel? I got business wid her."

"Miss Rachel? She in de house whar she b'long; go 'long to de back door, nigger, an' 'tend to yo' business."

Holiday, thus directed, gave a knock at the door

leading into the house from the back porch, and it so happened that his summons was answered by Aunt Rachel in person.

"How are you, Holiday, and how are all at Sister Gordon's?" asked Mrs. Caldwell.

"Sarvent, Miss Rachel; we is all well, marm, but de house is full clean up to de top, marm. Miss Patsy sont me over, marm, she did, to tell you all to be sure and come over dar to spend de day and night on New Year's."

"I thought you said the house was full to the top now, Holiday?"

"Oh, dat don't mek no diffunce, marm; some of dem solgers leaves to-morrow, and Miss Patsy always got plenty room."

"How are the roads, Holiday? Do you think we could reach Sister Patsy's with four horses hitched to a sled?"

"Yars, marm, easy 'nough even now; but by New Year's eve de travelin' twixt here and dar will be good."

"Very well, Holiday; tell Sister Patsy we will all try and get there by New Year's eve. Now go to the kitchen and Phillis will give you something to eat before you start back."

"Yars, marm; thanky, marm."

The following day was a busy one with the men folk at the parsonage. Colonel Paisly, Joel, and Daddy Scurlock, taking with them two of the negro men bearing axes, went into the wood, and soon returned with two long hickory saplings. These were fashioned into runners, the smaller ends being curved upward. Upon the runners a frame and body were constructed of boards, with seats inside to hold nine people. A pole

of hickory was bolted to the frame, and on this a double tree. In the end of the pole an iron ring was secured through which was fastened a stout hickory bar. This bar was used for both fastening the tug straps and as a single tree to which might be hitched other horses. The bottom of the sleigh was covered with a goodly supply of dry meadow grass, and, before nightfall, Doctor Caldwell, in admiring the work of his guests, pronounced the sleigh quite a luxurious nine-passenger coach.

"Soon I shall undertake the building of a smaller sleigh for two horses, for that will be our easiest way to journey home," said Daddy Scurlock.

"A very good idea, Mr. Scurlock," said the colonel. "Joel and I will help you, and, as there will be plenty of horses in the party, the only trouble will be to improvise harness."

"Collars and harness are the principal needs, Colonel. Give me plenty of rope and I will soon manufacture harness that would last from here to Georgy," was Daddy Scurlock's answer.

"I can supply the hames, and my man Ben can make you as good collars from shucks as you will need, Brother Scurlock; he makes all my plow collars and harness." Thus did Doctor Caldwell and his visitors discuss ways and means, all displaying no little mechanical skill in devising some sensible article or substitute for some pressing need, showing that each one was prepared in some degree to deal with that knotty problem called the future.

The open, sunshiny weather continued through the remainder of Christmas week, and the morning of New Year's eve dawned clear and very cold; the frozen surface of snow being hard and smooth as a polished

mirror. After breakfast the Caldwells and their guests began their preparations for the drive to the Gordons. Ben was a famous driver, and Doctor Caldwell always deferred to his opinion in matters pertaining to horse-flesh.

"Pick out your team, Ben," said the doctor. "There is my mare and Mr. Scurlock's; they would pull well together, and you can choose leaders from the other horses you know best, Ben."

"Well, sah, for de leaders I shall take Mister Sowell's hoss, and Mars John Paisly's big black."

"Are you not afraid to trust the big black, Ben?"

"No, sah; he is a knowledgable hoss, sah; full of sperit, but he will mind when you speak to him; ain't dat so, Mars John?"

"That is so, Ben; I see you know something about the character of horses."

"I been studyin' 'em all my life, sah, and dey don't fool me often. You all go and git ready, I will be all hitched in no time, and den dese hosses will want to be leavin' here."

The whole company soon made their appearance wrapped in warm woolens, and bearing blankets, while a tidy little housemaid brought in her arms four hot bricks wrapped in flannel. Mrs. Caldwell, the doctor, and Polly Rutherford took the back seat; Daddy Scurlock, the colonel and Sowell the one next, while Ben had the front seat all to himself; he needed a good deal of elbow room in the manipulation of his spirited team. The eager leaders felt the cold morning air, and were no sooner given their heads than with a bound they were off like an arrow from a bow. The mares were steady goers and could be relied on to hold in check the spirited leaders, and still the speed was much

too great to coincide with Doctor Caldwell's idea of safety. "Ben, Ben, check them; we are going much too fast, and should anything give way someone would be hurt."

"It's all right, Master David; when we gits to dat long hill yonder, I will make dem go up faster dan dey wants to, and when I git ready for dem to go slow, dey will be willin'." So the sleigh darted over the smooth icy surface at a speed almost rivaling what steam and electricity have achieved in later times. The younger folk enjoyed it all, while Doctor and Mrs. Caldwell and Daddy Scurlock would sometimes catch their breath, exclaiming, "Oh; amazing; prodigious!" Ben had not driven his four in hand more than two miles before the frisky leaders had toned down, and were now dashing along with heads erect, nostrils dilating and smoking, but obeying every command that Ben uttered with the fidelity of soldiers.

"Ben has wonderful skill with horses, Doctor Caldwell; I have some colts I should like him to break for me," said Colonel Paisly.

"Send them over," said the doctor; "Ben is never better pleased than when handling young stock, and my neighbors keep him quite busy when he is not occupied in farm work. I like to help my neighbors in that way."

"And in many other ways, my dear uncle; I know not what this neighborhood would do without you," said Polly Rutherford as she glanced brightly up into the dear old parson's face.

"Go on doing as I have told them, I hope, my darling Polly," the parson replied with a quaint smile, then added, "Men have lived to little purpose who do not find some imitators in perpetuating their best qualities.

But, just look, we are approaching Rafe Gordon's; how long have we been coming, John Paisly?"

"Just twenty minutes, Doctor; we have had a delightful drive, and cold as it is I believe we are all comfortable."

On the front porch at the Gordons stood Uncle Rafe, Aunt Patsy, and Charley Sheering, besides a squad of five of the troop, and the sleigh and its occupants received hearty cheers and greetings.

"Bless my life; why, Parson, you are a putting on style," exclaimed Uncle Rafe. "Get out, every one of you, and get to the fire, and Ben will take that wonderful rig around to the barn."

"Are you not nearly frozen, Sister Caldwell?" asked Aunt Patsy, as she greeted Mrs. Caldwell and Polly.

"Nay, Patsy; Ben did not give us time to get cold, we came here in twenty minutes."

"The speed was something like what I imagine flying would be, Aunt Patsy; it was so exhilarating, I enjoyed it," said Polly.

"I'll be bound for your young blood; but Polly, child, is not this your father?" asked Aunt Patsy.

"Oh, yes, Aunt Patsy, this is daddy, my daddy."

"I am glad indeed to meet you again, Mr. Scurlock, and to welcome you to our home. Have you shaken hands with Rafe? Rafe, here is Amen Scurlock." The greetings between these old friends were warm and tender, bringing up many a hallowed memory, then Daddy Scurlock threw his arm over Charley Sheering's shoulder, and, gripping his hand, said, "God has brought ye back safe, Charley; and Hannah and the children are anxiously waitin' for ye."

"And I shall hasten to them, Daddy Scurlock, the

earliest day we can travel; when are you going to start for Brush Creek?"

"Just as soon, Charley, as the roads are traveled and smoothed down a bit. We must all go together and make it a pleasant homecoming, but thar's one gone I'll miss to my dyin' day, Charley, poor Luke"; and Amen Scurlock's eyes filled with tears as he tenderly called Luke's name, while Charley in low tones spoke comfortingly to the old man of their mutual love and sorrow.

The visit to Rafe Gordon's was one long cherished, and was among the sweet memories of their social life, that all who were there delighted in recalling in after years. The day for Polly Rutherford's departure for home came all too soon for Doctor Caldwell and Aunt Rachel, for they loved the dear girl whose sweet voice and winning grace had, like the clinging tendrils of a vine, entwined about their hearts. At morning prayers, on the day of departure, the dear old parson's voice trembled as he committed the dear ones departing to the tender care of the all-loving Father, and Aunt Rachel and Polly Rutherford both wept at the parting moment, Aunt Rachel saying gently, "God be with my child, my beloved Polly, and give thee back to us some day."

"Farewell, dearest Aunt Rachel; your Polly will never forget the loving care you and Uncle Caldwell have so richly bestowed. May God bless you both."

Packed snugly into a tidy boxsleigh, their feet well protected by blankets, and the never-forgotten hot bricks, Amen Scurlock and Polly Rutherford were soon skimming over the frozen roads, drawn by Scurlock's mare and Joel Sowell's horse, and driven by the skillful hands of Colonel Paisly. Joel rode Paisly's black charger, and led Dapple, he and Charley Sheering with

the other boys from Brush Creek neighborhood following as rapidly as they could the steady, swift movements of the sleigh. The journey was made in less than three days, the hard freezing weather proving favorable by keeping the roads firm; and noon of the third day brought the whole party in sight of the old homestead at Skin Quarter.

"Now," said Daddy Scurlock, "every man of you come in and spend the night; no use to go further for bite and sup."

"All but me, Daddy Scurlock; a log chain wouldn't hold me, when Charley Sheering is this close to Hannah and the children."

"I can't blame ye, Charley; I can't blame ye; but stop by and speak to Mandy and Roxy."

"I don't mind doin' that, Daddy Scurlock, and it's likely we'll find Doctor Tony at Skin Quarter; yonder's Old Blaze, by hoky." Sure enough there was Old Blaze standing patiently at the horse-rack, and from the tracks of his feet in the snow he could not have been long there. Around the ingle in Aunt Mandy's room she sat, holding Master Tony Scurlock, while Roxy was busy with the winding blades, hanking some blue yarn. In Amen's seat, Doctor Tony sat smoking, while he gave the women folk the neighborhood gossip of the day.

"Daggoned if the war ain't about over, Aunt Mandy; Tim tells me the jig is up, and the next thing we know General Washington will march into New York, the bands playin' Yankee Doodle, and the redcoats will sail out'n the Bay. Tim keeps well posted, and says Fannin' is gettin' afeard to meddle with Brush Creek folk. Next thing he'll scoot out o' the country or stretch hemp."

"The devil go with him and peace stay behind him," exclaimed Aunt Mandy. Then she changed the subject, saying, "How's Cynthy a gettin' on up at Hardscrabble, Doctor Tony, in all this hard winter weather?"

"First rate, Aunt Mandy; Cynthy is one of the folks that is always ready for hard times; she was born ready. Plenty of wood under shelter, good fires; why that little darkie o' her'n nearly roasts me out sometimes, the way she piles on lightwood. Everything about the house is as clean as a threshin' floor, and I hain't seen a rat for I can't tell ye when. I think Hardscrabble is now just about the center of the promised land, for I have plenty of milk and honey."

"How does old Tim Shaw like the change, Doctor Tony?"

"Oh, fine; Tim rents the Cross Roads out for twenty pounds, ten shillin's; I have built him a tidy shop just above my house with a good sleepin' room in it, and he gets enough to do to keep him full pocketed. He seems tickled to death to see how Cynthy loves me, and waits on both of us, and says she's a daggoned sight more lovin' and handy gal since she was married than she was before. Cynthy is a God a'mighty's blessing, as sure as you live, Aunt Mandy."

"Tell me something I didn't know, Doctor Tony; hadn't been for me you never would 'a' had Cynthy."

"That's so, Aunt Mandy, but while we are a talkin' here, 'pears to me like there's a mighty conbobblement outside; I hear old Blaze a whinnyin' powerful."

"There certainly is somebody at the horse-rack, Doctor Tony, so we will go and see about it."

"Bless my soul and body, Aunt Mandy; if yonder ain't the whole shootin' match; Daddy Scurlock, Polly Rutherford, Joel Sowell, Charley Sheering, and Colonel

Paisly. Hallelujah!" and Doctor Tony hurried toward the gate between a skip and a run. He was followed by Aunt Mandy, and Roxy with baby Tony in her arms soon caught up with them. Daggoned if this ain't equal to a Georgy Campmeetin'. Howdy, Daddy Scurlock, Joel, Charley, Colonel Paisly, and howdy, Polly Rutherford, when I git a chance at her."

Meanwhile Aunt Mandy had caught Polly in her arms, and, kissing her between every word, kept exclaiming, "My blessed child; I feared you were never coming home again."

"Stop, Aunt Mandy, and kiss Daddy Scurlock awhile; we want a chance at Polly," said Doctor Tony.

"I am glad to see my old man, too," said Aunt Mandy, "and to see all these dear soldier boys safely back from the war," and Aunt Mandy gave a kiss of welcome to Joel, Charley Sheering, and the colonel, saying, "I make no difference, for you are all my boys."

The meeting between Joel Sowell and his wife and baby was touching; the strong man wept for joy, and Roxy clung to him as if fearing he might again be ordered away, while baby babbled and cooed with delight.

"Come right into the house, all of you; it's cold enough to freeze folk," exclaimed Daddy Scurlock. "I hope ye have good fires, Mandy."

"Yea, everything is warm, and a warm welcome along with it, old man; I'll call Scipio to take the horses."

"Just get Scipio to leave my horse in the barn shed, Daddy Scurlock; the sun is getting over to the west, and I must soon be going," said Charley Sheering.

"Four o'clock will be time enough for you to leave, Charley; you can then easily reach Corneal Tyson's a leetle after dark," said Daddy Scurlock. "You must

have bite and sup with us; indeed you must, although I know your heart is hungry to see Hannah and the chicks."

"I will bide until four, Daddy Scurlock; it will be a great pleasure to a half-starved soldier to eat once more a dinner of Aunt Mandy's ordering and old Anachy's cooking; you see I have a long memory for old times."

"Mandy will be sure to have enough for us all, Charley, and she loves to see a good trencher man."

Gathered about the best room fire, its blaze sending out a glowing warmth, this group of friends and neighbors were soon engaged in social chat; but Aunt Mandy and Roxy soon left Polly Rutherford and Master Tony Scurlock to entertain the gentlemen, while they proceeded to hasten the dinner. Master Tony had fallen quite in love with Polly, and no place suited him quite so well as in her arms; so while she talked, she also played nurse in a very graceful and acceptable manner. Colonel Paisly, as he watched the scene, thought he had never seen Polly Rutherford looking so winsome and so unconsciously lovely.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE WHITE DOVE OF PEACE AND THE ODOR OF ORANGE BLOSSOMS

"Why, Aunt Mandy," exclaimed Charley Sheering, as they entered the warm kitchen in which the table was spread, "you must have expected the whole troop; here are rations enough for the whole of 'em."

"I never do anything by halves, Charley Sheering; old Anachy has been cooking for a week past, and when I would ask her sometimes if she was not getting ready too soon, she would only shake her grizzled head and say, 'Gwyne git ready; Mars Amen an' my lamb (my lamb is Polly Rutherford), an' all dem hongry boys be here some day 'fore you know it,' and sure enough Anachy was right."

"It's an honest fact; here are more rations, Aunt Mandy, than we would sometimes see for a whole week about Yorktown, isn't that so, Colonel?"

" 'Tis true indeed, Charley, and the very thought of the abundance at Skin Quarter and Uncle Gordon's would make me so hungry sometimes I could have eaten broiled rat."

"Oh, horrors! was it as bad as that?" exclaimed Polly Rutherford, with a shudder.

"Worse, Miss Polly," said Charley. "I have eaten rat and so has Joel, and it wasn't so bad when a fellow got hungry."

"Oh, Joel, you didn't eat rat?" was Roxy's pathetic exclamation and question.

"I just did, Roxy, and about the camps of the French soldiers a rat stood no more chance for his life than a rabbit or a ground hog."

"Well, hush all that claver about your starvations, boys, and let me see if you have forgotten how to eat roast turkey, and old North Carolina ham," said Aunt Mandy.

"We don't need any persuasion, Aunt Mandy," replied the colonel.

"One of the most comforting things to me in the return of peace," said Daddy Scurlock, "is that all this killing, privation, starvation, and burning and destroying of property is about over. Now we can go to work mending our fences, tilling our fields, adding comforts to our homes. Oh, we have much to thank God for, and if we don't serve Him better now we will be a very ungrateful people."

"That is very true, Mr. Scurlock; I feel that every true citizen has a full share according to his ability in rebuilding our waste places, and in making our Carolina a worthy commonwealth to dwell in," said Colonel Paisly.

"That's worthily said, Colonel, and I'm goin' to do Tony Sidebottom's sheer, and thar ain't but one thing you lack to take your place in the front rank of the leaders."

"And pray what is that, Doctor Tony?"

"Why you ought to go right ahead and git you a wife; no man is fittin' to lead other folks untwill some good woman takes him by the ear."

There was much laughter provoked by Doctor Tony's advice to the colonel, and as soon as Aunt Mandy could

control her risibles, she exclaimed, "Now just listen to Doctor Tony; one would think he had been married fifty years, whereas his new condition is only a few months old. Now he wants every man and woman on earth to marry."

"That I do, Aunt Mandy; no man will ever reach the promised land in this world untwill he does marry; a man by himself, excuse me, Colonel, I was once so myself, is not much better than a mangy dog."

"I excuse you, Doctor Tony, and have long felt just as you do. Being classed with the dogs is not my choice, but my misfortune, and I shall certainly try some day to find the road to the promised land."

Polly had taken no part in the conversation since Doctor Tony had changed the trend of it, and as Colonel Paisly pronounced so earnestly his resolve to seek the promised land, she felt the blood tingling in her cheeks, her ears were as pink as a pink, and she sincerely rejoiced that just then the gentlemen arose from the table and sought the best room.

"They were getting pretty close to you, Polly, dear," said Roxy. "I saw you blushing and wished you well out of it."

"Oh, nonsense, Roxy; my blushes are chronic."

"Were you surprised, my child, that Colonel Paisly came home with you?" asked Aunt Mandy.

"No, mammy, because I knew he was coming; he told me he should come, and I could not say he shouldn't."

"Did you want to say he shouldn't, girlie?" questioned Roxy, provokingly.

"I suggested that his escort was not needed, but he did not seem to think so, and if it was any pleasure

to him to take that long ride in the cold, why do let the man enjoy it, Roxy."

"Oh, certainly, he is going to enjoy it."

"Roxy, you are so provoking; I must go and fix my hair, it is a perfect sight," and Polly Rutherford retreated to her own room all tidily arranged to receive her, and took a look at her flushed face in her own little mirror.

"What do you think of it, Roxy?" asked Aunt Mandy, as Polly Rutherford's receding form passed out of the cookroom door.

"What do I think of it? Why, it's as plain as a printed book that Colonel Paisly loves Polly, Aunt Mandy, and when he thinks the proper time has come he will speak his mind."

"Poor Luke!" and Aunt Mandy's eyes filled with tears as she further said, "He was so loving, so true, so dependable; Colonel Paisly ought to be walking delicately if he ever hopes to stand in Luke's place," and Aunt Mandy said no more about it just then.

Four o'clock came and Charley Sheering arose from the genial circle, saying, "Time's up, Daddy Scurlock; I must be off."

"Going to Corneal Tyson's to-night, Charley?" asked Doctor Tony.

"That I am, Doctor Tony."

"That bein' so, guess I'll ride with ye as far as Hardscrabble, for Cynthy will be lookin' for me," and soon the two were jogging along the road together, chatting of the past, present and future.

"Charley," said Doctor Tony, after they had brought their talk down to the troop, "Charley, don't ye think the Colonel is hard after poor Luke's gal?"

"Indeed I do, Doctor Tony; and if he makes the

right moves he will get her. 'Twon't do to crowd things, and maybe 'twould ha' been better for him had he not have come home with her."

"Paisly is a wise man, Charley, and he knows the ways o' women amazin' much. I'll bet he don't say a word o' love to Polly Rutherford while he's at Skin Quarter, but will help her do the mournin' for poor Luke. Then as time passes, and she begins to depend upon his visits, he'll pop the parable; they will be sure to splice."

"Well I should be sorry for Polly Rutherford to leave Chatham, Doctor Tony, but she'll never do better than to take Colonel John Paisly. He is a Christian soldier, he is a gentleman, and mighty well to do. He has a beautiful plantation in Guilford, besides his mother's place that will be his, and he is full of energy and thrift."

"I'm glad to hear that, Charley; I always thought he was made of the right stuff; but here we are at Hardscrabble. No use to ask ye to stay overnight, but wait a minute; I know Cynthy and Tim would like to shake hands with ye. Hello, Cynthy, Tim; here is Charley Sheering." Dr. Tony's call was answered by the quick footsteps of Cynthy, soon followed by the more deliberate steps of her daddy, and both of them gave Charley Sheering a hearty welcome home, and gladly heard the news of the homecoming of Polly Rutherford.

Milder weather followed the arrival of our travelers and the thaw Daddy Scurlock had dreaded set in in earnest. The roads became slushy, and the streams for more than a week were past fording. So Colonel Paisly's visit was prolonged beyond the time he had predetermined. He had rare powers of entertaining, and

whether he was talking to Daddy Scurlock, Joel, Aunt Mandy, Roxy, or Polly Rutherford, there was always an unerring wisdom in the choice of the subject, and he succeeded well in drawing them out so that they bore their full share in the discussion. He took long walks with Daddy Scurlock and Joel through the Skin Quarter plantation, suggested some improvement in the hillside ditches, and selected a spot which he advised Daddy Scurlock to drain and convert into a permanent meadow. They rode together over to Joel's desolate looking place, for his home had been burned, and, taking the poor fellow aside as they were viewing the gruesome ruins left by his enemies, Paisly said, "Joel, it looks desolate, I know; but I shall help you. God has spared me a little more than some of my neighbors, and you must take this fifty guineas and begin at once to set your house in order anew."

"Oh, Colonel, your offer almost unmans me; I was just thinkin' that I had no one to turn to. Daddy Scurlock has done enough for me, and he oughtn't to do any more, and daddy-in-law is not able to help me."

"What's that you are sayin' about Daddy Scurlock, Joel?" said the old man who just then returned from surveying the ruins.

"I was a saying you had done quite enough for me, Daddy Scurlock, in my reply to a kind offer of help from the colonel here."

" 'Plow your own heifer,' Joel Sowell, and let Amen Scurlock plow his'n. I am goin' to help you and Roxy rebuild as soon as 'tis safe to do so. Meantime, you will all just stay on at Skin Quarter; do you hear?"

"I hear, Daddy."

"Then mind the old man and let him have his own way."

The afternoon before Colonel Paisly was to leave for Guilford, as he sat with Polly Rutherford in the best room, he proposed that they should take a walk and breathe the bracing air. Polly soon joined him, and by mutual consent their steps turned toward the little clump of cedars lifting their green heads above the snowclad sod, and a walk of ten minutes brought them to the little picket fence, and soon they were silently standing over the white grave of Luke Stallings. Colonel Paisly at last broke the silence, saying in pathetic tones, "Here sleeps my best friend, and I promised him in his last moments to be an unfailing friend to you, my dear Miss Polly Rutherford. I claim the right to mark his resting place with a memorial stone, and to be your friend, my dear girl; to shield you and watch over you; to shelter you from every trial that man can fend off. In doing so I shall only seek you when I can serve you. I shall never intrude upon the sacred precincts of your great sorrow unless I can help you, and you shall choose the way in which I can best help you. You know I told you I should live for others, just as Luke died for others. His model was the Divine Master and ours should be the same."

Polly Rutherford shaded her face with her hand as with bowed head and tear-filled eyes she listened to the colonel's earnest words, and for a time could find no words in which to answer him. At last, in low trembling tones, she said, "My heart is very sad and sore, Colonel, but I do appreciate your love for Luke, your friendliness to me; and if I can find no words that express it I wish you to feel that were I in need of a friend I should send for you. You must pray for me, and should you be passing this way in future days, re-

member daddy, mammy, and I will be glad to have you at Skin Quarter."

"I will ever pray for you; I do thank you, dear friend, that you accept my offered friendship, and while I shall, as I said, not intrude, my trust received from Luke will not permit me to drift away from you. May I not come at intervals and see you and your dear parents? for they, too, are very dear to me."

"You know best, Colonel, how to dispose of your valuable time, and I know that you will have much toil and care pressing upon your head and heart. But when you feel that a ride across the country and a change would benefit you, we will always extend a welcome."

"Then we understand each other, at least in part, Miss Polly Rutherford, and I feel now glad that I came home with you. I shall leave you on the morrow, feeling privileged to come again before the year grows too old; and may I not sometimes write? I love to write to my friends."

"I shall not deny you your request, Colonel; if you will find any recreation in epistolizing one who is a poor correspondent. I like to get letters, I cannot say I am an adept at writing them."

"We shall see how that is to be, Miss Polly Rutherford; now give me your hand on our compact. Remember, you are to let me be your friend next to your dear parents, for you are very dear to me." Polly laid her trembling hand in his, and as he tenderly pressed it he said, "You may always command me to do what you choose," and slowly they retraced their steps to the house and sought shelter in the cozy best room.

The following morning, Colonel Paisly took his departure, and he was followed out to the horse-rack by

the entire household. His leavetaking was quite in character with his warm heart and polished manners. Shaking Daddy Scurlock's hand he thanked him for much past kindness, while the old gentleman assured him of an ever hearty welcome at Skin Quarter. He put his arm around Joel Sowell's shoulder and said, "Old comrade, good-bye; God grant us many meetings." Then, taking baby in his arms, he kissed the dear little fellow's rosy lips many times, while he bade the young mother adieu. At last Aunt Mandy came forward and said, "God bless you, Colonel, for all you did for Luke. Here is my parting blessing in the kiss I give you." Polly Rutherford was the last one of the group to receive the pressure of his hand, and to catch a tender light in his farewell glance, and Colonel Paisly mounted the black charger and soon passed out of sight.

"There goes a knightly gentleman, Mandy," said Daddy Scurlock, "and one o' the smartest I ever talked with. He is a good farmer, can handle a saw and hammer with the best of 'em, and then he knows all words; can talk with Parson Caldwell on doctrines, or plead a law case."

"Land sakes, old man; you make out Colonel Paisly a second Moses; I know he's pretty smart and all that, but he certainly has got on the blind side o' ye. What do ye think about it, Polly?"

Thus appealed to, Polly, who had been standing by, gazing up the road in the direction Colonel Paisly was last seen, replied: "Colonel Paisly is, as daddy says, mammy, a knightly gentleman, and quite as clever as he has been represented to be. Uncle Caldwell says he is one of the brainy men of Guilford."

"Well, he's had all sorts of chances, he ought to be. A man born rich and educated by David Caldwell

ought to be somethin' extraordinary," said Aunt Mandy, as she turned to go into the house.

"The old lady feels sore about poor Luke, my darter," said Daddy Scurlock, as he put an arm around Polly and slowly walked with her toward the house. "She feels as if poor Luke didn't have no chances, and she loves his memory too tender to see much good in any other young man yet awhile. Why do you s'pose Colonel Paisly came with us home, Polly, dear?"

"Because he wanted to, I suppose, dear Daddy," replied Polly with a blush.

"Do you think he will be comin' ag'in, Polly?"

"You asked him to, did you not, Daddy?"

"Oh, yes, child, of course I did; that was manners. But did he say anything to you about comin' ag'in?"

"Yes, he said his friendship for us all would not let him drift away from us, and he asked if he might not come now and then to see us. I told him yes, and I do not doubt that some day he will come again."

"Paisly is a wise and good man, Polly, darling; he will never do or say anything that looks inconsiderate, but he will come as nigh doin' right every time as any man I ever knew. Yes, he will always be a welcome visitor at Skin Quarter to yer daddy, my child."

This ended their conversation, but Polly understood where Colonel Paisly stood in the opinion of both her daddy and mammy, but as yet she gave them no sign as to his status with her.

We now follow the track of our story to its end, amid more quiet and homelike scenes. The master of the Red buck and the Bay doe, within a few months after the incidents last recorded, disappeared from North Carolina, and, joining the British army, finally drifted to St. Johns, New Brunswick, and from thence to

Digby, Nova Scotia. While he is said to have professed conversion and joined the Presbyterian church, a nameless crime committed by him subsequently proved his heart to be as black in the later years of his career as when he was a red-handed Tory, filling up the bloody measure of his crimes in North Carolina; would that the waters of oblivion could wash out his record or that so harmful a creature had never breathed the air of Carolina.

The return of Colonel Paisly to his home was followed by months of earnest toil. Spring found him busy supervising his mother's large estate as well as his own plantation, which fortunately lay contiguous to it. There were ditches to be opened, new barns to be built, fences to repair, while he also established on the public road leading toward Alamance church a blacksmithing and woodworking shop. Over this establishment Mike Kinsey was duly installed, and proved to be a faithful and efficient worker, who could ever after afford to wear a superior quality of number twelve shoes.

Early June found farm and shop work well advanced at Blytheside, as the colonel called his home, and he found himself growing lonely of evenings, especially as his mother was now spending a little while at Sister Patsy Gordon's and the Caldwells. It was, therefore, no surprise to his faithful servant Isham when he was told one night to have the black charger saddled at dawn the next morning, while orders were issued to the cook to have breakfast at five o'clock.

"Hi, what de marter wid Mars John, Isham? Whar he gwyin' now?" asked the old cook.

"I ain't inquirated, Betsy, but business look lak we is gwyin' ter have a young mistress 'fore long; all we got to do is follow the cunnel."

The second day after the colonel's departure from Blytheside, found Polly Rutherford in a state of expectancy, for she had received a letter from the colonel through the medium of a passing traveler, in which he had named a day in June when she might expect him, and this was the day. Aunt Mandy had noticed that her daughter seemed "a little nervy" as she expressed it, and proceeded to question her. "What are you so restless about, Polly Rutherford? Why you are just a livin' on that front porch to-day, and seems like you can't sit still a minute."

"I am sure it is too warm to stay indoors, mammy; the porch is the coolest place."

"Yes, the porch is the coolest place, but that ain't your only reason; who are you expecting, child?"

"Colonel Paisly, mammy."

"Ah, ha! Well now, child, I hope you will quit havin' the blue devils for awhile, and chirk up a bit. I know it's mighty lonesome here, and I am certainly glad the colonel is comin', for he is real good company."

"Sometimes I am glad and then again I have a dread of his coming, mammy; we parted as very good friends when he was last here, and I know that relationship will not long satisfy Colonel Paisly."

"Small blame to him for that, child; Colonel Paisly loves you, Polly Rutherford, and he is only waitin' out of due respect to our dear Luke's memory. How do you feel towards him, child? Are you not, way down in your heart, glad he is comin'?"

"I will admit that much, mammy."

"And haven't you been a mopin' about the house and garden ever since the first snow drops and crocuses bloomed?"

"I fear I have, mammy; I am getting to be a nuisance, and you will be wanting to get rid of me."

"Never will want to get rid of ye, child; I came nigh weepin' my eyes out while you was in Guilford, but I know when you give your heart to John Paisly you will follow him to the world's end if he goes thar, so I must just bear it, I s'pose, like all other mothers."

"I am sure of one thing, mammy, and that is, should I ever accept John Paisly, providing he should ever ask me, you will be a more loving mother-in-law than the average, for he has a way of just making people love him."

"No doubt you think that last, child; we shall see. I didn't say I didn't love him now, and seems to me you have put in more if's and whereas's than are at all needful to the circumstances."

"There is an odor of orange blossoms about Skin Quarter, and I am expecting a visit from Doctor David Caldwell sometime before frost, so give me a kiss, Polly, and may the good Lord bless you, my child."

It was more than an hour before sunset when the black charger reached the home of Polly Rutherford, and John Paisly received such a welcome as filled his heart with a bright and expectant hope; and his dreams that night were more than realised in after days.

THE END

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CHARLOTTE, N. C.

IDLE COMMENTS

By Isaac Erwin Avery, edited by Prof. Edwin Mims, late of Trinity College, and University North Carolina, now of Vanderbilt. New edition with a dedication to the late Joseph Pearson Caldwell, by Wade H. Harris, editor *Charlotte Observer*. The plates of the book are the property of Trinity College and all royalties from its sale go to the Erwin Avery Scholarship Fund of Trinity College.

Cloth: $1.50 net; postpaid $1.62. Special Gift Edition. Green Ooze Calf—bound "Roycroftie," $2.50.

BOOK NOTICES

"Idle Comments."—In a former issue we had a brief notice of this delightful book, which we wish now to notice more fully.

These papers came out at different intervals in the *Charlotte Observer*, and when they first appeared, the reading public realized that a new star had appeared upon the horizon, though we all realized also that no one could get a proper idea of the writer from these occasional articles.

However, even with these disadvantages, the articles were read with eagerness and quoted with delight.

Now that they are before us in book form, we are really astonished at their cumulative power over us.

There is nothing in American prose that can excel them. They range from frolic to the severest morality, and through them all there runs a vein of pathos that touches the tenderest part of our natures.

His heart seems peculiarly susceptible to the tragedy of the fallen women, which is seen in the article of the Girl with a white dress, or the death in Springs Alley.

Mr. Avery did not live long enough to prove whether he could write anything more ambitious than these fugitive pieces, but we believe that the man who could write as he did, day after day, was capable of anything in the line of literature.

North Carolina has reason to be proud of her literary children, and among them she rightly places Erwin Avery at the head.

We are indebted to the Stone Company of Charlotte for

the beautiful new edition of "Idle Comments" by I. E. Avery.. The book is dedicated to Joseph Pearson Caldwell, the greatest editor North Carolina has produced, and the prefatory note is written by Wade H. Harris, the present editor of the *Charlotte Observer*. Avery occupies a unique position among our North Carolina men of letters. This book, which embraces the cream of his writings, is fresh, natural and wholesome, and the Stone Company have done a great service in bringing it out in this very attractive form.

"Idle Comments" is a volume made up of the miscellaneous writings of Mr. Avery, who during his service with the *Observer* ran each Monday morning a column of philosophical musings, humorous comments and human interest narratives under the general head, "Idle Comments." The collection embraced in the book, however, is not confined to what appeared in that feature, the other notable writings also being selected from his work on the paper. The book was edited by Dr. Edward Mims, head of the department of English literature at Trinity College, and later at the University, now a member of the faculty of Vanderbilt University and so admirably executed is the work that this volume appears as if it had been written in just the order in which it appears by Mr. Avery.—*Charlotte Observer.*

With the rush of the Christmas season driving his force to work day and night, and with his own hands filled with tasks unfinished, the writer has sat for two hours idly turning the leaves of the book that holds for posterity the charm of Avery's pen and the fascination of his personality.

If there is another of North Carolina's sons whose pen has the power to move and to charm as does Avery's, we have not found him. And if there is any book, of the thousands turned off the presses of the nation this year, wherein one hears the voices of the children or catches so really the fragrance of flowers, we have not seen it.

What present for Christmas is so appropriate as a book? What book could be bestowed with better taste than Avery's "Idle Comments," which truly breathes a Christmas Spirit?—*Elizabeth City Advance.*

STONE PUBLISHING COMPANY,
Charlotte, N.C.

"Songs Merry and Sad"

By John Charles McNeill. Sixth edition. Cloth, $1.00 net. By mail $1.06. Limp Leather (Brown Ooze Calf, bound "Roycroftie,") $1.50 postpaid.

Some Press and Other Comments

"I have read after Mr. McNeill and I have enjoyed his work." — *Theodore Roosevelt.*

"The published poems of John Charles McNeill are said to be meeting with a ready sale. The fact is a compliment to the literary taste of North Carolina people."— *Editorial in Greensboro Telegram.*

"It is not too much to say that in the realm of pure poetry no more satisfying volume than this has been published in the United States in a decade."— *Norfolk Landmark.*

"It is a neat book and contains fifty-nine poetic gems from the pen of Mr. McNeill. It is a fortunate thing that they have been grouped into book form that they can better be preserved and in that shape constitute a lasting and valuable contribution to North Carolina literature."— *Editorial in the Wilmington Star.*

"His work I think is the most ambitious and the most successful of all Southern verse writers of the day."— *Interview in Birmingham Age-Herald.*

"One must go across the Atlantic to Stephen Phillips to find so tender a note and so deft a touch as Mr. McNeill here reveals." — *Editorial in the Biblical Recorder.*

"Seems to have in him the making of a great poet."— *Editorial in Progressive Farmer.*

"He is one of the rarest literary geniuses we have in the South."— *Editorial in the Raleigh Christian Advocate.*

"The verses in this volume have about them that indefinable quality which distinguishes poetry from mere verse. The workmanship is so good that one almost doubts sometimes whether it is not only the perfection of technique that allures and whether the true soul of the poet is really here and not only the hand of the artist. But as we read on we begin to see that the singer's

lips have indeed been touched with the glowing coal from the true altar of song. We congratulate Mr. McNeill on this charming volume."— *Charleston News and Courier.*

"His discrimination was splendid — he embraces in this volume the best verse he has written. We hold him as the genius of North Carolina, and this little volume justifies the claim."— *Editorial in the Charlotte Observer.*

"The delicious Southern flavor and the tender touches of the old plantation life make it especially refreshing to our Southern people. It is the very cream of the work of the young author, which has brought him the favor of the public in so great a measure. It is perfectly free from affectation, but it is couched in faultless English and reveals the highest gifts of the poet."— *Editorial in Charity and Children.*

"Mr. McNeill is fast becoming one of the leading writers of the South."— *Editorial in the Clarkton Express.*

"He has the gift, and there are those who are hoping that the South shall have in him the poet who shall speak to the heart of the world."— *Editorial in the Presbyterian Standard.*

"In the death of John Charles McNeill the State loses the finest poetic genius ever born within its borders."

"But not one of these was the equal of McNeill. He surpassed them in natural endowment, in range and delicacy of sympathy, in loving familiarity with the homes and habits of woodland things, in subtle knowledge of the great primal emotions of the heart, and in that still rarer gift of craftsmanship, without which the greatest genius must remain inarticulate. McNeill was a poet because he looked life straight in the eyes, felt the virgin wonder and glory of it all, and knew how to body forth his feelings in lines of exquisite art and compelling appeal. I would rather have written 'Songs, Merry and Sad,' than to have the costliest monument in the state erected to my memory. The equal of that little volume has not appeared in the South since Sidney Lanier fell on sleep twenty-six years ago."— *C. Alphonso Smith.*

Lyrics From Cotton Land

Third Edition, with portrait and a short biographical sketch of the author, artistically bound in Bandana Cloth. Illustrated with five drawings by the celebrated artist made famous by his "Coon" drawings, E. W. Kemble, one picture by A. B. Frost, and eight photographs by Mrs. W. O. Kibble, among them a photograph of cotton showing bloom, full boll and open boll on the same stalk. Price $1.50 postpaid.

Orders for this book have come from all sections of the United States and Canada. It is easily the most distinctively Southern book ever published.

"'Lyrics from Cotton Land' will remain a priceless legacy to the children of the South. It is a voice that had become almost a memory. It is a key to the treasure house of a period fast receding. It glorifies with simple and soulful melody 'the tender grace of a day that is dead.' 'Uncle Remus,' up to the advent of the brilliant young Scotchman, was the most faithful and accurate exponent of 'Mr. Nigger' in the realm of letters, but Joel Chandler Harris is not a whit more life-like in his portrayal of the language as well as of the spirit of the old time darkey than John Charles McNeill."—*Charity and Children.*

"Joel Chandler Harris has the black man down perfectly; John Charles McNeill puts down the black man's thoughts and language with perfect fidelity; and as an interpreter of his thoughts and dialect, H. E. C. Bryant is scarcely inferior to either."—*J. P. Caldwell, in the Charlotte Observer.*

"Seldom have we seen a book which has more charm and fascination than 'Lyrics from Cotton Land,' by the late John Charles McNeill; seldom a book of its character with a wider range. Not only are the songs of the South sung as they are rarely sung, but throughout is a touch of pathos and humor

which makes the heart throb and clothes life's stern responsibilities with new meaning."—*Pinehurst Outlook.*

"If anyone ever says to you again that the South does not produce beautiful books, you are hereby authorized to state that that person is a —— mistaken. You will only, for instance, have to refer him to Stone & Barringer Co., of Charlotte, N. C., who has sent for review among other volumes, a book, 'Lyrics from Cotton Land,' by John Charles McNeill, which is as tastily produced, attractive in appearance and appropriately bound as any book this scribe has seen in a long time."—*Birmingham Age-Herald.*

"Tinctured with the quaint spirit of the South, 'Lyrics from Cotton Land' contains ninety-seven poems, and every one of them is worth thoughtful reading."—*San Francisco Examiner.*

"Two years ago John Charles McNeill died and was buried near the home of his parents in Scotland county, but he is not forgotten, for he left behind a monument more lasting than stone. The friends of the charming young Scotchman with the poetic gift, did not begin to realize his real worth until after he had passed away. His songs and lyrics are more highly and genuinely appreciated to-day than they were when they first came from his pen."—*H. E. C. Bryant, in Charlotte Observer.*

"A distinct pleasure is felt even in just looking at the Bandana edition of John Charles McNeill's 'Lyrics from Cotton Land.' It is by far the most attarctive book ever published in the State. The publishers, Stone & Barringer Co., of Charlotte, N. C., have displayed unusual taste in the cover. As the name 'bandana edition' signifies, it is bound in gay bandana cloth with a small round picture of a true old Southern mammy on the front cover. The whole production is typically Southern and unique."—*Raleigh Evening Times.*

In Love's Domain

By H. E. Harman. Cloth $1.50. Limp Leather (Green Ooze Calf) $2.50.

"I want to send you my very sincere thanks for the great service you have done me in sending me Mr. Harman's 'In Love's Domain.' My long absence from my native State has caused me to miss Mr. Harman's work, and it was a pleasure to find it so beautiful and true. It is not a mere versification that I find in this book, but poetry, literature and noble feeling cast in noble form. I hope you will present my compliments to Mr. Harman, and express to him my deep sense of pride in his work and appreciation of his thoughtfulness."—*Edwin A. Alderman, President University of Virginia.*

"Poet, publisher and printer have combined their talents to make an exquisitely charming volume for the book lovers out of 'In Love's Domain,' and they have accomplished their task. If the magic of the book-maker invites one to the easy chair and the fireside, the spell of the poet and the art of the engraver have called indoors some of the glory of the fields and the woods. That a North Carolina publishing house and a North Carolina poet should produce a book of poems in such rich mechanical setting calls for due honor and appreciation of North Carolina people, and this we hope both author and publishers will receive in a measure at least equal to their high desert."—*North Carolina Education.*

"The verse of H. E. Harman has been compiled by Stone & Barringer Co., of Charlotte, and issued in book form under the title of 'In Love's Domain and the Call of the Woods.' Mr. Harman has the gift of poetry, and his book will charm and please the reader to the utmost. The illustrations are tasteful and the mechanical work neat. Mr. Harman is a business man, but takes time to commune with nature and the beautiful things of the world, and his verse is a natural expression of the fine thoughts within him."—*Raleigh Evening Times.*

"There came to our desk this morning the sweetest little book we have ever seen. So daintily bound that we were sure that

within its covers must be beautiful thoughts. We opened it and our eyes rested on the following lines:

"'When close of day has set the west aglow
And night comes on with steady steps and slow,
I yearn for touch of vanished hand again
And touch of lips as in the long ago.'

"We read on while the busy world around us rushed on in its foolish bustle, until our soul was full of sweet thoughts, and we laid the dainty volume away to be read again and again in our home after the shadows have caused the curtains to be drawn, and we feel that we have a little treasure that will brighten our life and chase many gloomy thoughts away.

"We thank the author, Mr. H. E. Harman, a Southern man, for giving to his people a book that is full of beautiful thoughts, and appreciate the kindness of the publishers, Stone & Barringer Co., of Charlotte, N. C., in sending the book our way. We hope every Southern man and woman will get a copy of this book."—*Burlington News, Burlington, N. C.*

"'In Love's Domain' is a most exquisite book of poems. All the verses have been given a most artistic setting, and the illustrations are beautiful. No expense appears to have been spared by the publishers, and the fact that a Southern publishing house can bring out a book of poems in such expensive style shows that the South is coming into its own in a literary way. The author of 'In Love's Domain' is Southern, the making of the book is Southern, and in the result every Southerner must feel a pride."—*Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, Norfolk, Va.*

"'In Love's Domain' is a triumph of Southern book making. We have seen no volume more artistically and beautifully gotten up. Every illustration is inspiring, most of them being from photographs. It is a hopeful note for Southern literature that such a volume should come from publishers in Dixie. They are to be congratulated.

"The verses of Mr. Harman are exquisite and full deserving of their artistic setting.

"This book is well worth while. It would make a very pretty

Christmas present."—*Charleston News and Courier, Charleston, S. C.*

"The volume is nothing less than exquisite. Binding, paper, typography, all are exactly in harmony, while no holiday book on the market for many years has surpassed 'In Love's Domain' in beauty and aptness of illustration. The pictures of nature are particularly fine, those depicting landscapes and woods bringing with them the very scent of the big out-of-doors. The publishers have fully appreciated the value of the work they have undertaken and have given it a vehicle which leaves nothing to be desired.'

"There is in his work the breath of the woods in spring, the color of the blooming dogwood, the scent of the fields covered with daisies. This world, judging by the view of it given in his poetry, is to him a place to be enjoyed, with plenty of sorrow mixed in to form the necessary contrast. His note is sweet and clear, rather than majestic and compelling."—*Review in Charlotte Observer.*

"Mr. Harman writes verse, not in the spirit of the professional writer, but because many gently beautiful things within him struggle for and find beautiful expression. The inner life which he combines with business success shows how the South may combine old ideals with new material advancement. The published volume is an exquisite thing, a thorough credit to the publishers. 'In Love's Domain' belongs with the Avery and McNeill books, belongs in that high lineage."—*Editorial in Charlotte Observer.*

"'In Love's Domain' is an alluring volume of sweet simplicities from the Hills of North Carolina, issued by the Stone & Barringer Co., of Charlotte, N. C. This beautiful book is dedicated to all 'Who walk the ways of sweet content, outward and back again.' Of sweetness and light there is enough in the modest volume, and now and then the poignant praises of genius is sung in humble measure. H. E. Harman is the name of this new songster of the South, who prettily names the domains of love as an 'amber plain.' He will be heard from in more robust fashion again, no doubt."—*Jacksonville Sunday Times-Union.*

GATES OF TWILIGHT

By H. E. Harman. Cloth $1.50; Limp Leather $2.50.

"If Harman's vision included to the utmost, the visible tangible beauties of the world — and no more — much of 'The Gates of Twilight' would never have been written.

"Versifiers there have been who hymned the beauties of nature without seeming to see anything therein but perfection of sensuous loveliness, but their work has promptly been assigned to oblivion. Harman is not of these. His mind and heart thrill with delight at the budding hawthorn, or the willow-shaded stream; his soul instantly rouses itself to inquire whether or not there is meaning behind these lovely shapes."— *From the Charlotte Daily Observer.*

"Whoever knows and loves the South will find deep enjoyment in the poems which Henry E. Harman has included in his new volume. He will also be proud that a Southern publisher has produced so beautiful a book.

"Mr. Harman is at his best when he writes of the South, its natural charms and its wealth of historic tradition. Songs of the South form a goodly part of the 63 poems.

"The book is bound in the daintiest blue, and the photographs of Southern woodland scenery are both attractive and appropriate to the text. There are also several posed photographs."— *St. Louis Post Dispatch.*

"The keynote of this volume of idyls is struck in the dedication, which reads:

> "'Who loves the sunlight on the hills,
> Who feels a pain at human wrongs,
> Whose soul at childhood's laughter thrills,
> For him I sing these simple songs.'

"In many of these poems the author shows an advance over his previously published work. The same spontaniety and freshness obtain, but there is a firmer touch, a surer confidence, a more daring flight. 'The Fields of May' is, perhaps, the best of the longer poems, being full of beauty and musical value. All

are lofty and uplifting. Two tributes to Southern poets, Sidney Lanier and John C. McNeill, are found in this volume. The poem 'The Master In the Garden' is strongly suggestive of Lanier's 'Ballad of Trees and the Master,' and is worthy of its subject, strong and dignified. The illustrations are from photographs, and those of scenes from nature are very attractive, and add to the charm of the book."— *New Orleans Picayune.*

"A most beautiful piece of book-making. Sixty or more verses with many exquisite illustrations interspersed. The illustrations are from photographs, the most being scenes of our southern woodland, field, marsh and mountain. Especially fair is the one 'The Pictured Glory of the Dogwood Trees,' 'Spring Along the Fair Savannah,' and 'Willow, My Willow' are also very beautiful. Many of the poems are written in an admirable spirit of patriotism, 'Pickett's Charge,' 'Gettysburg,' 'The Sound of Sumter's Gun.'

"One of the most excellent pictures is that of the live oak at Brunswick, Ga. Under this tree Sidney Lanier is said to have written his 'Marshes of Glynn.' The tree is known the country round as 'Lanier's Oak.'"— *Birmingham, Alabama, Age-Herald.*

"Tar Heel Tales"

By H. E. C. Bryant ("Red Buck"). Price, Cloth (North Carolina, Brown checked Gingham), $1.25 net. By mail $1.35.

Personal Letters (Published by Permission)

"I thank you heartily for the copy of 'Tar Heel Tales.' The binding is unique and very attractive; the illustrations are excellent and illustrate. The best compliment that I can pay to the contents is to say that I took the book home the evening afer receiving it, and dipped into one of the little stories experimentally after supper, and read story after story, finding it impossible to lay the book aside until after eleven o'clock, and then laid it aside only under orders from Mrs. Joyner. I trust that it will have the wide sale it deserves."—*J. Y. Joyner, Supt. Public Instruction, Raleigh, N. C.*

"Your 'Tar Heel Tales' are delightful. They are as good negro dialect stories as have ever been put into print. This is the first book I have read at one sitting in a long time. I hope that this is not the last one that you will write."—*Champ Clark.*

"I have just finished reading 'Tar Heel Tales,' and am delighted with it. The stories are bright and sparkling, the humor is delicate and refined. The negro dialect is such as only a genuine Southerner can write. It is none of the 'make-believe sort' so often found in books by authors unacquainted with the negro at home."—*W. R. Mills, Supt. Public Schools, Louisburg, N. C.*

"Your stories are delightful, strongly written and true to the character of place and people. I think that I have read 'Uncle Ben's Last Fox Race' ten times and I shall read it willingly ten times more, knowing that after that I shall still have the determination to be a 'repeater.'

"I do not know the negro as you know him, but I have, I think a much truer knowledge of him and his ways now that I have read 'Tar Heel Tales.' Every Northern man, and I am one, should read your story 'A Negro and His Friend.' I have several book cases given over entirely to nature books. 'Tar Heel Tales' shall have a chief place among them."—*Edward B. Clark, Chicago Evening Post, Washington Correspondent.*

A prominent educator says of Mr. Bryant: "As a writer of negro dialect, I do not place him next to Uncle Rumus — Joel Chandler Harris — but absolutely his equal; his negroes do not use stage negro talk, but they talk, think, and act like the niggers I knew as a boy on my father's farm."

Press notices of "Tar Heel Tales" have been numerous and kind.

Here are a few extracts:

"The book is mechanically an interesting product of the book-maker's art. The printing, paper and binding are all good. The cloth covering used is a brown checked gingham, and the title 'Tar Heel Tales' is twined about with a burry pine bough stamped in green and pine-bark brown."— *North Carolina Education, Raleigh, N. C.*

"Mr. H. E. C. Bryant, of Charlotte and Washington, knows how to tell a good story well. Story-telling with him is a gift and an art. In the old days when he was still a bare-footed, red headed, freckle-faced farmer boy, even then, he knew how to tell a story, and wherever the boys gathered in the Providence section, young Bryant was the magnet around which the others were attracted, and when he talked, and that was usually all the time, the others listened. His powers in the way of story telling were a source of wonder and admiration to the other boys. This natural gift he has cultivated until now he tells or writes a story that will appeal to and hold anyone. His stories of the negro and of the old days and of fox hunts, of which sport he is a past-master, have long attracted attention and because of the place they have gained in the hearts of the people and the insistent demand for them have at last been issued in book form. 'Tar Heel Tales' is the name of the book which is now presented to the public."— *Evening Times, Raleigh, N. C.*

"The book is a sure enough Tar Heel production. The writer is a red-headed Tar Heel. It is dedicated to Mr. J. P. Caldwell, the well known Tar Heel editor. It is published by Stone & Barringer Co., of Charlotte, N. C., a Tar Heel book company. It is bound in checked gingham, a Tar Heel production, and the tales (and they are good ones), are about Tar Heel folks. If you want a book that will put you in a good humor when you have a case of the blues, get this book."— *Spring Hope Leader.*

The Breed and the Pasture

By J. Lenoir Chambers. Cloth, Price $1.00; By Mail $1.06.

"In the 'Breed and the Pasture' we have certain features of an easily recognized piedmont community, sketched by the pen of one who knows and loves it well.

"It is not the purpose of this article to abstract or summarize what this exquisite set of essays contains. No one who is interested in the course of events which have led to the creation of the New South can afford not to read every line of them. The whole may be completed from cover to cover in a single uninterrupted evening. This done, the reader cannot fail to have a clearer insight into the meaning of the expression 'down home' and to feel a deeper throbbing of the sentiment conveyed in the well known lines beginning, 'Here's to the land of the long-leaf pine.' Furthermore, he will have become acquainted with a set of essays couched in as clear and beautiful language as any that have appeared for many a year, a style that, never becoming stilted or over-ornate continues from first to last, lucid, euphonious, charming.

"The 'Woman of the South' has been toasted at countless banquets, has been lauded in thousands of fulsome, yet heartfelt words. Scores and even hundreds of tributes spring to mind. In all the articles this reviewer has ever read dealing with this favorite topic, there is not a single one which equals Mr. Chambers' chapter entitled 'The Forgotten Woman,' in beauty of conception and delicacy of execution.

"The apologists for the South have too frequently over-emphasized the 'story of the glory of the men who wore the gray' to such an extent that economic phenomena have been thrust to one side or entirely neglected. The chapter mentioned is a dispassionate and philosophical statement, not of a partisan, but of a cool-headed, practical man of affairs, of how matters look to him from a retrospect of nearly half a century after Appomattox. The defects of the Southerner are not minimized any more than are the undoubted virtues of the Puritan omitted and the

result is a distinct contribution to the philosophy of the history of the Civil War."—*Review in Charlotte Observer.*

"Mr. Chambers, whatever his personal experience, could not have written as he has done without fine selective imagination joined to graceful style. No prosy reminiscences here, but the firm touch of a man who has only reached the prime of his life, and whom years may never make old. His are different pictures from those which the public justly grew tired of long ago. We find them delightful. Evanston, the town which Mr. Chambers describes, with its neighboring county seat, will be recognized at once by many people. Most of his characters belong to this present generation — Isaac Erwin Avery among them."—*Editorial in Charlotte Observer.*

MEMOIR OF JULIA JACKSON CHRISTIAN

Daughter of "Stonewall" Jackson, by M. A. Jackson (her mother). Charlotte, N. C. Cloth, 50 cents, net.

"STONEWALL" JACKSON'S DAUGHTER

"This is an interesting and pious little memorial of the only child of 'Stonewall' Jackson's that survived infancy, Julia Jackson, afterward Mrs. Christian. Julia was born in Charlotte, N. C., November 23rd, 1862, while her illustrious father was at the front. As General Jackson never left the army on furlough, his little daughter was four months old before he saw her, when her mother took her to his camp, then at Guiney's, Va.

"The brief story is simply but tenderly and lovingly written, and it should be valued by thousands of 'Confederate' mothers and daughters. The book contains a number of interesting letters and much information concerning Stonewall Jackson and his home life."— *Columbia State.*

"This memorial of the brief life of Stonewall Jackson's only child, written by the great soldier's venerable widow, cannot fail to stir the heart of every Southern reader to whose hands it comes.

"It is written with the same purity and simplicity of style which delighted us in the Life of Gen. T. J. Jackson, from the same pen.

"Even if we did not know her for a hero's daughter, the beautiful life so beautifully told in this dainty volume would deeply interest us. But when we realize to whose intimacy we are here admitted, we welcome this memoir with a glow of grateful enthusiasm."— *Charlotte Observer.*

"This book, like this article, is, of course, intensely personal. Mrs. Jackson has simply taken the people whom she loves into her heart and told them a simple story of her 'holy of holies.' The people of the south will appreciate the confidence and love the Story."— *Raleigh Times.*

"DIARY OF A TAR HEEL CONFEDERATE SOLDIER"

By Louis Leon. Cloth. Price $1.00 net.

This Diary is not ambitious in a literary way, and it lays claim to no greater than it's face value, that of a simple record of the work and play, joy and sorrow, deeds and misdeeds, of a private-of-the-line on the Southern side of the great Civil War. It does not possess the polish of the classics and is even sometimes ungrammatical; but that in itself helps to make it as engaging a little volume as one may soon find, and it will hardly be laid aside before a complete perusal. It's great attractiveness lies in it's absolute naivete. The narrative is entirely artless and as genuine and unspoiled as a wild rose. It comes direct from the heart of L. Leon. When he says that the girls in a near-by factory "made up for the damp ground" of the camp, we know it is literal truth; we are charmed with his sincerity when he says: "We got some whisky into the camp which tasted very good and made us forget the cold"; and we laugh outright at his tale of running down and quartering a farmer's shoat" which he carried back to camp in his haversack. Flashes of inimitable native humor illumine what would else be a pathetic record of hardship: as his story of finding two chickens in a deserted yard which he says, "we captured, for we were afraid they would bite us"; the statement "we laid all night among the dead Yankees, but they did not disturb our peaceful slumbers"; and "Hugh Sample and myself were out on a forage, and milked a cow in his hat, the only thing we had." Most appealing to Southerners is the fine reverence with which he (a Jew) speaks of "our father" Gen. Lee. He says: Our father, Lee, was scarcely ever out of sight when there was danger. We could not feel gloomy when we saw his old grey head uncovered as he would pass us on the march, or be with us in a fight. I care not how weary or hungry we were, when we saw him, we gave that Rebel yell, and hunger and wounds were forgotten." Leon's Diary is an addition to Southern traditions. Such an intimate, genuine record of the daily camp life and battle life of an average "Rebel" lad, from the first "long roll" which called to Bethel, to the rat infested and small-pox plagued prison at Elmyra, N. Y., where so many learned the crushing news of Lee's surrender, is not to be passed by lightly.—*North Carolina Education.*